

Class II G 863

Book T 47

162
3008

SICILY
AND
ITS INHABITANTS.



Engraved by R. & D. Havell.

View of the City and Port of Messina.

Published April 2, 1813, by Henry Colburn, Conduit Street, London.

SICILY
AND
ITS INHABITANTS.

OBSERVATIONS
MADE DURING A RESIDENCE IN THAT COUNTRY,
IN THE YEARS 1809 AND 1810.

BY W. H. THOMPSON, ESQ.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY, CONDUIT-STREET, HANOVER-SQUARE;
AND SOLD BY GEORGE GOLDIE, EDINBURGH; AND
JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.

1813.

IG 863
T 47

B. CLARKE, Printer, Well-street, London.

Dedication.

MY greatest pleasure in becoming an Author, is the opportunity it affords me of acknowledging the obligations I owe to the friendship of one, whose liberality of sentiment, and goodness of heart, I have often experienced.

It is therefore with feelings of the highest respect and regard, that I dedicate the following pages to that esteemed friend, Lieutenant-Colonel F. DILLON.

W. H. THOMPSON.

London, February the 1st, 1813.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Address to the Reader.—Remarks on the general Produce of Sicily.—Importance of that Produce to the British Empire. Page 1.

CHAPTER II.

Defects of Agriculture.—Possibility of its Improvement.—Fertility of the Soil.—Beauty of the Country.—Oppressed State of the Peasantry.—Contrast between what Sicily might be and what it is.. 14.

CHAPTER III.

Political State of the Country during the Author's Residence there, in the Years 1809 and 1810.—Evident Dissatisfaction of the People.—A slight Digression.—Concluding Remarks 30.

CHAPTER IV.

Dependence of Malta on Sicily.—Difference between the late State of the Country and since the Arrival of the English.—The Demand for English Manufactures.—British Merchants.—Female Education.—Sicilian Ladies.—Anecdotes.—Reception of the English.—Sicilian Language.—Specimen of their Poetry.—Advice to Travellers 44.

CHAPTER V.

Royal Family.—The King.—The Queen.—The Hereditary Prince.—The Princess.—Prince Leopold.—Duke of Orleans.—His Wife.—Duchess Dowager of Orleans.—The mode of living of the Royal Family.—Description of the Favorita.—Manners of the Queen in Public—Palace at Palermo.—Short account of it.—Paintings.—Armory.—Observatory.—Desultory Reflections 66

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

Author's Arrival off Girgenti.—Appearance of that City from Sea.—Mazzara.—Remarks on it.—Marsalla.—Trapani.—The Coast, and appearance of the Country.—Arrival at Palermo.—Description of the Capital 84.

CHAPTER VII.

Description of Palermo continued.—The Marino.—Mode of Living.—Conversation.—Description of it.—Various Remarks on the State of Society at Palermo.—Sicilian Ladies.—State of the Morals.—Cause of Conjugal Infidelity.—Education. 116.

CHAPTER VIII.

San Rosalia. — Account of that Saint. — Description of the Festival in honour of her.—Some account of the Churches at Palermo.—Reflections on the mode of Worship.—Convent of the Capuchins.—Monreale. 134.

CHAPTER IX.

Convent of San Martino.—Description of it.—Reflections, Political and Descriptive.—The Carnival.—Account of the Amusements.—Remarks on the Political changes that have lately taken place —Environs of Palermo.—La Bagaria.—Il Colle.—Monte Pelegrino.—Greek Colony.—Some Remarks as to the Police 156.

CHAPTER X.

A short Excursion into the Interior of Sicily as far as Caltanizetta.—Author's return to Palermo.—Departure from thence for Messina.—Observations on the Route.—Termini.—Cefalu.—Brolo.—Milazzo, &c.—Messina.—Account of that City.—Catania, and Route to it.—Mount Ætna.—Route to Syracuse.—Description of that City.—Concluding Observations 190.



13°

14°

15°

16°

37°

38°

37°

15°

16°

Sicily

SICILY

AND

ITS INHABITANTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.—REMARKS ON THE GENERAL
PRODUCE OF SICILY.—IMPORTANCE OF THAT PRODUCE
TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

IN offering this Book to the public, I am apprehensive the question will be---why write, when so many have written much better, and on a subject which so many are going to write upon? In answer, I must be permitted to say, that long before I ever thought of becoming an author, I was accustomed to keep a regular journal of all I thought worthy of observation: and as to my present motives for writing, they originated in a wish of finding for myself some agreeable employment, and in a faint hope that the remarks which I have now thrown together (if not a source of improvement, which I am

scarcely vain enough to imagine) may yet at least serve to lead to further investigation; and even as mere matter of amusement, will be found to possess some novelty, and to fill up a leisure hour, I trust, not disagreeably.

I confess also to have another motive. The great mass of my countrymen have never been out of their own country, nor ever will. And I have met with so many who conceive that our political conduct abroad is always attended with injustice, that, however unequal I may be to the task, I hope I shall have credit for the motive which induces me to take up the pen---a desire of vindicating our national character.

I wish here to deprecate every idea of having any intention of setting up my own judgment decidedly against the opinions of those whose age and experience may give them a much better title to direct public sentiment. I only offer my own opinions to the world; and I shall bow to the public decision, whatever it may be.

Neither do I pretend to call my publication, travels. It is merely a body of remarks, made at different times and periods, and which, in publishing, I have endeavoured to arrange under such heads, and in such a

manner, as I thought would be most agreeable to my readers.

In the history of the world, there never has been a period so pregnant with great events as that of the last twenty years; nor in any part of that period more serious changes than may be expected at the present moment. In the contest between this country and France, the whole civilised world is more or less engaged and interested. What the final issue may be cannot be foreseen. The only consolation we have is, that it is an event dependent on the benevolent will of Almighty Providence; yet still requiring our own active exertion, and the best exercise of our judgment.

The awful state of our own country, in the lavish profusion of public expenditure; the enormous and increasing expence of carrying on the war; the evident disapprobation of the people at the measures pursued by government; with the heavy pressure of the times on all classes of society, more particularly on the laborious part of mankind; accompanied by the fact of our resources for meeting these increasing difficulties being in a state of daily deterioration, render it the duty of government to avail itself of every opportunity which presents a prospect of lessening the burdens of the people: and in furtherance of this, it is the chief object of this book to prove how

much England is interested in the welfare of Sicily ; and of how much consequence it is that the French should not obtain possession of that island.

I abhor every idea of taking advantage of the misfortunes of the Sicilian Royal Family, to deprive them of their last retreat. I feel convinced that such a measure will never be pursued by the English government : but I do think that every principle of policy and self-defence, against a powerful enemy, should make us do all in our power to prevent Sicily becoming a province of France.

Having resided for a considerable time in the capital of Sicily, I made it my study to inquire into the produce and resources of the country ; at that time, indeed, without any other intention than the wish a man naturally has of gaining general information : but the result of my inquiries convinced me that Sicily produces, or would produce, every article of commerce which Italy formerly furnished us with ; and that, if protected by this country, she might in time, by proper encouragement from her own government, be able to furnish us with great quantities of grain, in return for our manufactures.

The most superficial observer, visiting Sicily, cannot help exclaiming that nature has done every thing for it---art nothing. With little or no cultivation, it produces

not merely the necessities, but the luxuries of life: and in regard to those immediate articles which it exchanges, or would exchange, for the produce of other countries; they consist chiefly in oil, shumack, rags, wines, sulphur, silk, barilla, and various other articles of lesser importance, to which we may add the no less interesting fact, that the eastern parts of the island, under a scientific cultivation, might be rendered capable of supplying us with many articles for which at present we are obliged to depend upon the Levant trade. In traversing the half cultivated regions at the foot of Mount Etna, even at the present day, the tourist may observe all kinds of fruit, generally considered as the produce of warmer climes, succeed and ripen; and that all the luxuries of more southern regions might be introduced with success is evident, from the fact that the palm tree here produces and brings to maturity the *date*, an article of great request as a nutritive food in most parts of the east.

Nay, the mountainous region of Etna itself affords a wide field for improvement, and that on a larger scale than might at first be imagined, for it has been already proved by analogy, and even here too, by some successful experiments, though on a small scale, that all kinds of fruit, whether of the temperate or torrid zones, might be raised at progressive altitudes, if the inhabitants were more numerous, had a little more of the spirit of industry.

and were guided by a more skilful mode of rural economy : a circumstance not of slight importance, when we reflect, that even twenty years ago, the produce of the Indian fig and prickly pear, in the district around Palermo, amounted to ten thousand pounds annually.

It is also a curious botanical fact, that the cinnamon and coffee trees have been found wild in the district of Etna, together with many other rare aromatic plants.

No one, on perusing these facts, but must be convinced of the great consequence to this country of remaining on terms of friendship and alliance with Sicily ; more particularly when it is considered, that many of the above articles can only now be procured in Italy in any abundance, whilst, from the preponderance of French influence, our ships are shut out from all the Italian ports.

The demand for oil in this country, of the best sort, is very great ; that which is considered the best comes from the neighbourhood of Naples. That part of Italy which formerly belonged to the Venetians produces it of a very good quality, and great quantities are also made in Spain : but any person who has been in the latter country knows how extremely bad it is ; nor is there any made in Spain for exportation that can be compared to that which comes from Italy ; whereas the oil made in

Sicily is fully equal to the very best made in Italy, and the quantity of it would inevitably increase as the demand for it became greater. This alone is an article of great importance, which we cannot do without; and from whence can we procure it, should the French succeed in getting possession of Spain and Portugal?

I trust, however, this remark will not be considered as a proof that I think such will be the case; my own personal observations, and the opinions of many, well informed on the subject, convince me that we have every reason to be sanguine with respect to the ultimate success of ourselves and allies. I merely mention it as one of those events which may happen, and one, the consequences of which ought, if possible, to be guarded against.

I am aware, that by the permission of the French Government, some oil has, within the last few years, been procured from Naples, and that there are olives of a very fine sort which come from the Levant, and also a small quantity of oil; but the distance is much greater, and, I believe, the quantity is in no degree equal to our home consumption.

Shumack and barilla are also articles equally necessary for our home manufactures, and for which we are in a great measure dependant on Spain and Sicily to provide

us with. The latter country might be made to produce much more than it does, as it will grow on land which is incapable of being cultivated for any other purpose.

Rags may at first sight appear an article of small importance, yet this is far from being the case; for since we have been shut out from the continent, it has been found very difficult to answer the demands of our paper manufactures. Great quantities are sent from Sicily, and I cannot more completely prove their importance, than by saying that, notwithstanding the distance from this country, many ships are almost wholly freighted with rags. Formerly, Germany used to supply us with them by way of Trieste; but there, as well as from all the other parts of the continent, we are now entirely excluded. In regard to wine, this country might procure from Sicily every kind it wants. I believe, some few Sicilian wines have found their way into England; but from the great distance, and little encouragement and demand for them, added to the heavy duties when they arrive here, I do not believe they form one of its exports. Nevertheless, I have drank in Sicily almost every kind of wine under different names, that is procured from other countries. This is of no little consequence to us, for should Portugal be lost, from whence are we to procure wine.

Mr. Woodhouse, an English merchant resident at

Marsala, is, I believe, the only person who makes wine fit for the English market: this wine is at present sold in London, and is called Marsala after the town where it is made: it is in my opinion nearly equal to Sherry, and will keep as well. The price for a pipe at Palermo was eighty dollars.

The Bagaria wine made near Palermo might, there is little doubt, be made equal to the best Port. I have also drank wine in Sicily, exactly similar to Champagne and Vin de grave, with many other sorts too numerous to specify, which, in my opinion, were fully equal to the French wines.

That these wines might be greatly increased in quantity is self-evident; and that they are capable of being made fit, in all cases, to suit the English market, may deserve a little elucidation. Of their real strength and body, no other proof is requisite than that they may, even in their present unimproved state, be left in casks half empty, without losing any of their strength or flavour: and even now, in many places, their colour resembles sound Madeira; whilst their flavour and strength, as noticed above, are fully equal to the best Sherry.

Their capability of improvement rests on the simple fact, that though they have fallen considerably of late

years in general esteem, that has solely arisen from the injudicious practices of the farmers, who, borne down by the demands made upon them, and unable, and, perhaps unwilling, to spare the expence and labour necessary for a judicious selection, very improperly mix all the different gatherings of the grapes together. It is recorded on the best authority, that formerly three crops were produced in the same vineyard, all differing in quality, and that from the same vines; merely by the mode of gathering the ripest fruit, from week to week, during the general vintage. Of these, the second was esteemed the best; but in each crop a variety was produced, by first extracting a portion of the juice, without either working it in the tub, or even pressing the grapes, which yielded a very light wine; after which, wine of a different quality was obtained by the common mode of pressure.

Other varieties were produced by allowing the grapes to wither in the sun, before they were put in the press, from which proceeded a dry, light wine, resembling the white Cape; and last of all, almost innumerable variations in flavour and consistence took place, by mixing wine of different ages with the new, in different proportions; though the only two sorts in the island, really distinct, are the white Muscado, and a red wine, generally known as Calabrese.

The demand for wine in this country, which is greatly increased by the consumption of our navy, is well known ; and although I understand there is a sufficient quantity now in England for several years, yet still the situation of affairs renders it advisable not to depend for so necessary an article on the uncertain events of war.

I also think it necessary to remark that our government must reduce the heavy duties on the importation of Sicilian wines, if they wish this country to derive any advantage from them ; and the consequent increased consumption would, I conceive, make up any difference which such reduction of the duties might occasion in the revenue.

The importance of Sulphur is well known ; and though we obtain it from other parts of the world, yet the consumption is so great as to make it of considerable consequence as an article of commerce. That which comes from Sicily is particularly fine ; and from the inquiries I made on the subject, I have reason to believe the quantity imported might be greatly increased.

Silk is exported both raw and manufactured, and, with proper encouragement, is capable of great improvement. Their silks are of as fine a quality as those made in France ; and the silk in the raw state equally as good as that of

any other country: but here again, the heavy duties on importation preclude their being introduced into this country. How far this may or may not be necessary for the encouragement of our possessions in India, and our manufactures at home, I do not pretend to decide; at the same time I think it is worthy the serious consideration of our government, whether Sicily, which is of so much importance to our Mediterranean trade, and is also our ally, does not deserve to meet with some favour and encouragement from England, as to her commerce.

In hazarding these remarks, I merely give my own opinions, the result of observations and inquiries made on the spot, and partly in consequence of reflections on the subject since.

There are many other articles that I shall not here dwell upon, as it would extend this chapter beyond its prescribed limits, but which are not of less consequence to us.

The possibility of making Sicily provide us with Grain, is an affair of so much importance as to demand more attention than I have yet given to the subject. The few ideas that occurred to me, when resident there, I shall give in another chapter: if, however, this book should meet with a favourable reception, I would readily devote any

time to a full and complete investigation of the best means of effecting it; and I have reason to believe the Sicilians do not want inclination to meet our wishes on the subject.

Perhaps in saying this, I may be undertaking more than I am equal to; but where the motive is good, and does not originate in any presumption on my part, as to my own abilities, but from the wish of being a useful and serviceable member of society, I trust a generous public will make allowances for any general arguments I may make use of.

Every man sees things in a different point of view from his neighbour, and the human mind is always inclined to favour its own opinions; but in my own case, I must be permitted to say, that I hope I am not self-opinionated, or prejudiced in favour of my own judgment on this particular subject, but shall be happy to be instructed, or corrected by those whose superior abilities may give them a right so to do.

CHAPTER II.

DETERIORATED STATE OF AGRICULTURE.—POSSIBILITY OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.—FERTILITY OF THE SOIL.—BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRY.—OPPRESSED STATE OF THE PEASANTRY.—CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT SICILY MIGHT BE, AND WHAT IT IS.

EVERY Englishman, travelling in Sicily, must lament the badness of its government, and the oppression and poverty which its inhabitants labour under. Nature has bestowed upon them the finest climate in the world, and has given them every production necessary to their comfort and happiness. In some parts of Sicily we see the most magnificent and awful scenery, and we contemplate a country where the foot of man does not seem to have trod since the creation of the world. In others, it presents the most beautiful views that imagination can conceive, where every thing the eye beholds speaks joy and gladness to the heart.

No person whose observations of nature have been confined solely to England can form any idea of the effect the delightful climate of Sicily has upon the feelings of an Englishman when escaped from the fogs of his own island; nor can one wonder at the difference of manners

in such a climate, as it even harmonises the feelings of a stranger, and makes him feel more inclined to love and assist his fellow-creatures. This is a sentiment I am inclined to think most Englishmen must have felt who have been in Sicily: and when we see so fine a country almost wholly uncultivated, and so amiable a people sinking into the worst of vices, for want of an energetic government to give that due encouragement to industry which is the great promoter of virtue, one cannot help pitying the country, and, notwithstanding their faults, admiring the many amiable qualities of its inhabitants.

As I do not pretend to give a general account of the state of agriculture in Sicily, I hope I shall be excused should my remarks on the subject not appear sufficiently extensive. The observations of a private individual, and those made for his own information only, cannot be expected to be more than general ones: whether I have been correct in them, time only can shew.

From the cultivation of the country immediately around Palermo, a stranger would be apt to form a very favourable opinion of the industry of its inhabitants, though, even in the vicinity of the capital, it does not produce one half of what it might be made to do. For some miles round Palermo every thing bespeaks an attention in the proprietors to improve and cultivate

the land: on all sides we perceive fine meadows irrigated with care and attention; luxuriant gardens with noble palaces; and in places where nothing else will grow, immense plantations of the prickly pear—a fruit, which in the hot climate of Sicily is most grateful to the inhabitants, is profitable to the landlord, and to the poorer sort of people is a necessary, the absence of which would be severely felt. Here, amongst many fine estates, that of the Prince Trabeias, on the road to Monreale, struck me as being particularly well cultivated.

That side of the country stretching from Palermo, called the Bagaria, is beautifully romantic; and, generally speaking, well cultivated. It produces grain in great abundance, with some pasture; immense quantities of grapes; every species of vegetables, except potatoes; while the most luxuriant orchards of oranges, lemons, figs, &c. bounded by the sea on the left, and by lofty mountains on the right, form a *coup-d'œil*, which cannot fail of striking the spectator; at the same time gratifying his heart to behold the industry of man successful.

Any person satisfied with a superficial view, and not inquiring further on the subject, would leave Sicily with the conviction of its agriculture being attended to, and its peasantry happy: but unfortunately this is not the case. Nothing can be more oppressive than the system,

which the law authorises the great landholders to pursue. It is nearly similar to the old feudal system, with all its rigours, and slavish restrictions.

Large principalities, for they cannot merely be denominated estates, are in the hands of individuals ; whilst the occupying tenants are almost wholly in the power of their landlords. This power and jurisdiction is very extensive ; the latter almost absolute, as there are few, who, on their own estates, have not the power of life and death. It is, however, deserving of notice, that this power is an usurpation beyond the original grant ; for when the Norman conqueror of Sicily, Earl Roger, bestowed such unlimited powers on his feudal barons for the government of their vassals, still he gave them nothing but the property and bodies of the Saracen infidels, who had wrested the island from the Greek empire, and who were then considered by the unlettered Christians as objects not of charity, but of contempt and hatred.

Under the persecutions which naturally followed, the Saracens became extinct, or nearly so, and their lands, held under the most abject conditions of vassalage, became the property of Christians, whilst, at the same time, the barons refused to permit any diminution of their paramount authority, or to suffer the new occupants to hold them under any other terms than those

of the original grants; a procedure, however, by no means agreeable to the original intention of Earl Roger, who could never have proposed to reduce Christians to the same state of abject subjection, in which, for the honour of God, according to the absurd ideas of the times, he had placed the unfortunate infidels. These privileges have, in some measure, been done away with; but, I am sorry to say, I believe there is still little chance of a poor man obtaining justice if his oppressor is rich.

Whilst this continues to be the case, the country must remain what it now is: every thing is monopolised; and even where the tenant rents for his own use, he is generally obliged to sell his produce to his landlord, though another person would give him a better price for his commodity.

I have certainly met with some exceptions to this rule, but by no means often enough to lead me to suppose that this system, so oppressive in its nature, is not generally pursued by all the great landholders.

Were these laws all revised, or abolished, and was the government to set the example, by giving due encouragement to industry, there is no doubt that, even now, this country might furnish all Europe with grain, particularly as it is a well-authenticated historical fact, that Sicily,

even when it fed many more inhabitants than it does at present, was considered, notwithstanding, as the granary of the Roman empire. It is truly worthy of observation, and proves the astonishing fertility of the soil, that here, where every thing is left almost entirely to nature, yet, nevertheless, the harvest is more bountiful than in any other country. What would it then not be, was it cultivated, and attended to, in the same manner as in other parts of Europe?

It will hardly be conceived, that although in this fertile soil it is only necessary to put the grain into the ground to insure plentiful crops, yet still in most of the villages there are seldom or never to be found the necessities of life; meat never to be found, often not bread: the worst wine (and that not in abundance), burnt peas, and sometimes *macaroni*, were the only sustenance the wretched inhabitants had to live on.

How lamentable to see so fine an island so totally neglected! Frequently for twenty miles together I have not perceived any appearance of the country being inhabited, or cultivated; and even where it is, the population is so small, and the habitations so thinly scattered, as sufficiently to prove the oppressed state of its inhabitants.

To return to the subject of Grain: the laws relative to

the exportation of it are so unjust, as to preclude any hope of improvement in the agriculture of Sicily, till they are either repealed or altered. Grain was, and would again be, the great commodity of this island, under a good government; but, as I have remarked above, the laws, which either preclude its exportation, or oblige the proprietor to pay such exorbitant sums for the privilege of doing it, as to swallow up all the advantages and profits, must destroy every effort of industry. Still must it be confessed, that, in the present imperfect state of agriculture, an immediate abrogation of the existing laws, before means were taken to correct the consequent evils, would not be advisable. If, indeed, the licences for exportation were regulated on the principles of our English Corn Laws, and faithfully and judiciously distributed, then might they become, even now, advantageous; but the present mode is so formed and regulated as to produce frequently the very evils which it was intended to correct.

There is a tribunal, called the Real Patrimonio, whose duty it is to take a survey of the annual crop, and to estimate the quantity necessary for home consumption, before it issues a single licence for exportation; but unfortunately it does not always attend to this rule, as the great feudatories can generally procure a licence, which they always have it in their power to monopolize,

and are even enabled to oblige the smaller landed proprietors to dispose of their surplus of corn to them, almost at their own price, in consequence of this monopoly.

When the corn regulations first took place, it was an object to facilitate the means of this export trade; and as the number of harbours proper for it is not very extensive, particularly in the southern district, public magazines were formed in different places, so as to shorten as much as possible the distances of land-carriage: and of such importance was the proper management of those depôts considered to be, that one of the seven great officers of state, called *Il Maestro Portelana*, was entrusted with the management, and vested with the power of conducting the sale of the corn, both at home and abroad. However injudicious the continuance of this regulation, at least at the present day, accompanied by a tax which has tended much to the present ruinous state of agriculture, yet it must be acknowledged that one part of the plan might be considered worthy of notice in better regulated communities; for here, whatever corn was brought in, previous to its being shipped, a receipt was always given for it, which was as negotiable as a bill of exchange, for the space of one year only, being always cancelled on the granting of a licence, and thus preventing a monopoliser from keeping his corn until it was unfit for human purposes.

I have already said, that I have not studied this subject sufficiently to hazard giving a decided opinion generally ; but it is evident, that no farmer will be at the labour of cultivating his ground, if he cannot find a purchaser for his produce afterwards : and this would inevitably be the case, under present circumstances, was only the fourth part of the land in Sicily cultivated. In some few instances, I saw appearances of considerable knowledge in the distribution of different productions suited to the soil, and of taste in the manner of cultivating it ; but in general the land appeared to me much neglected. The large tracts of barren land in the interior, producing nothing, might in some degree be permitted to escape animadversion, from the thinness of the population ; but in the neighbourhood of the capital, the same neglect is still seen, notwithstanding it has the appearance of one immense garden, though, when inspected more closely, it is easy to perceive that it does not produce half what it might.

I must say in favour of the people, that, with little or no encouragement, they only want example, and a good government, to become a most industrious race ;---ingenious they are already.

What I have said of the country round Palermo will hold good as to the other cities ; that is to say, imme-

diately in their vicinity appearances of a regular system of agriculture may be seen, and provisions found in tolerable abundance; but when not near some town, every vestige of cultivation ceases; and the beauty of the country is evidently owing to the bounty of Providence, and not to the industry of man.

Another great cause operating to prevent the improvement of agriculture is the total want of roads, and consequent impassability of the country. For the first forty miles after leaving Palermo, towards the interior, they are very good; but beyond that they are mere tracks, which, without a guide well acquainted with the country, it would be impossible to discern. Mules are the only animal that can travel over them; and the quantity of grain or merchandise that can be carried to the capital by this mode of conveyance must of course be very small to what it would be were the roads such as to be practicable for carts. It is evident that a facility of conveying his produce to market, and, when there, of finding a purchaser, is the great incentive to the land-occupant, whether he is proprietor or tenant, to cultivate and improve his land. In the small towns, in consequence of there being little or no exportation, and no buyers for more than is necessary for personal home consumption, the farmer would experience a heavy loss,

was he to carry to market a greater quantity of produce than is wanted for the use of the inhabitants; and this is one reason why so small a portion of the country is cultivated, and is also the cause that in every abundant harvest they will not even take the trouble of gathering in the grain, as there are no purchasers to take off their hands an overplus of stock.

If the Sicilian government would cause roads to be formed from all the towns in the interior to the capital, and communications (which is not now the case) from one town to another, it would inevitably produce a large increase to the wealth and commerce of their country: one province would then have the means of exchanging its productions with another, constant intercourse would improve and civilise the peasantry, and the capital would become the great mart, whither all their superfluities would be carried: nor do I hesitate to affirm, that, provided the oppressive laws relative to grain were repealed, and the power of the nobility curbed by salutary laws, which would give the poor the secure possession of their little property, and justice, when oppressed, then this country would again become the finest in the world; and that, instead of having only an exhausted treasury, with the absence of all resources; and instead of being disliked by its subjects, the government

would be powerful and rich ; its resources would daily increase ; it would be loved by its own people, and respected by surrounding nations.

What a contrast to its present state ! Now nothing is seen but misery and oppression on all sides, and a government sunk into the last stage of weakness---forgetting the numerous advantages it possesses by nature, forgetting that although it has lost the better half of its kingdom, it still possesses a country that might be made, under a patriotic ruler, great and powerful, producing within itself almost every thing requisite to its own consumption, and numerous articles of commerce necessary to its neighbours ; in exchange for which, it would receive all the productions of other countries which it might require.

One very particular circumstance which tended much to check the spirit of commercial enterprise in Sicily is fortunately now removed : this was its dependance upon Naples, the resumption of which ought to be strictly guarded against, whenever the latter country shall be restored to its legitimate government.

In fact, previous to the late political changes, as it has formerly been observed by several intelligent travellers, there was scarcely any direct trade between Sicily and

other countries, the greatest part of its imports being received through the medium of Neapolitan merchants, except when foreign vessels arrived at any of the ports, looking for a market.

In almost all cases, indeed, the articles of importation were those of absolute luxury, seldom ranking amongst the necessities of the lower orders, with the exception of lead, iron, and some other heavy commodities, and general articles of clothing. Except these there was nothing imported that could exercise the ingenuity of man, or give employment to his industry, whilst the payments were either made in gold and silver, or in the raw unmanufactured produce of the soil. It happened, therefore, that a year of scarcity of Sicilian produce was always attended with a diminution of foreign importation, arising from the inability of their stock to meet the demand, even for the importation of *grain*, which in this fertile country was sometimes *necessary*.

Nor was this all---for by this system the invigorating impulse of commercial speculation, which provides in years of plenty for times of scarcity, was completely dormant, the whole of their trade, both foreign and domestic, being quite of a passive nature, and carried on by the simple barter of their superfluous products for foreign luxury, and for such articles as might have been.

produced by their own industry; for the proportion of raw materials manufactured in the country was very small, being totally inadequate to home consumption, and of course affording no surplus for exportation.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the shipping of Sicily was on a very small scale; and even this was confined in its extent from a cause which operated powerfully, but, under present circumstances, has ceased to exist. This was the constant state of predatory warfare which existed between Sicily and the piratical states of the north of Africa, which then confined their small vessels entirely to the coasting trade, and obliged them to trust to foreign bottoms sailing under a free flag for all their necessary imports, even from Naples itself.

No country, however, can be more advantageously placed for becoming a commercial state than Sicily: it has, or might have, particularly on the north and west sides, the finest harbours in the world; and its situation is such as to make it the emporium of the Mediterranean trade: but all these advantages are lost, and will remain so, whilst the government continues what it now is; whilst it encourages that gross superstition into which the lower class of people in Sicily are sunk; and continues to pursue its present despotic system of governing.

which paralyses every effort of industry, and makes a desart of the most delightful country the sun ever shone upon.

I cannot close this chapter without remarking that I have not mentioned in the former one half the productions of Sicily. To prove this, I will add a few of the other numerous articles with which it is capable of supplying us.

It produces great quantities of cork, and of the finest honey : it also produces the finest marbles, vitriol, cinna-
bar, mercury, and nitre ; whilst liquorice, oranges, lemons, figs, almonds, and grapes, are in the greatest abundance, uncommonly fine, and form no small part of its commerce. Nor have I the least doubt that it possesses in its mountains other minerals of no less value than those I have already mentioned : it is more than probable that it abounds in all.

Add to these also, the pearl and coral fishery at Trapani, and I will leave to my reader to decide whether such a country does not deserve a good government, and whether it is, or is not, in the present state of affairs, of consequence to do all in our power to assist it. The people have every inclination to love and esteem us : and I trust our conduct will continue to be such as to remove all jealousy from the minds of their rulers. Good faith

and integrity are written in the heart of every Englishman, and we are too great, and I trust too good a people, to take advantage of the misfortunes of our friends. On the contrary, I am convinced, from good authority, that we have been more scrupulous in interfering than we should have been, had the king still possessed Naples. We are fighting for our own liberties, and the liberties of our fellow-creatures ; and whether we succeed or not, I trust we shall never stain our fair name by injustice to those whom we take under our protection.

At the same time, I am not one of those who would tamely allow Sicily to be wrested from us. If the government prefer the French alliance to our's, after all our expence in supporting an army in their country, and subsidising them, I conceive we have then a full right to adopt such measures as prudence, and our own welfare as a nation, may demand.

CHAPTER III.

POLITICAL STATE OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE AUTHOR'S RESIDENCE THERE IN THE YEARS 1809-10. — EVIDENT DISSATISFACTION OF THE SICILIAN PEOPLE, — A SLIGHT DIGRESSION, INCLUDING REMARKS.

THE means I possessed of becoming acquainted with political affairs were of course rather confined; still, however, I had some opportunities, and I endeavoured to gain every information on the subject that was in my power. I was generally acquainted with every person of any consequence; with some few most intimately. I was in habits of friendship with many of that class of society which in Sicily are not allowed to rank with the nobility; I mean private persons; and from whom I gained considerable information. I had also various opportunities of seeing the Royal Family, and I knew many persons who held situations of importance in the country.

Sicily, when I was there, as far as I could learn with the above means of information, was divided into four parties.

The first was very small in numbers, and chiefly composed of men who wished their country to be dependant

on no foreign power. The second, by far the most numerous, was formed of those who wished the interference of England, to give them the blessings of a free government.

The third consisted of persons who were desirous of seeing Sicily a province of France.

And the fourth, and last, comprised all those who have followed the fortunes of the Royal Family; all those French who are attached to their interests, many of whom have great influence; and those Sicilians who approve or support the present government.

The Sicilians who are desirous of receiving no foreign aid are many of them men who would be happy to see their country rank as high as she ought to do: but they should consider that wishing alone will not effect this. Great efforts must be made by the government, and great abuses abolished: and until the example is set by the higher classes, the people cannot be expected to make those exertions necessary to their becoming great and powerful. At the head of this party were men whose character stood high in public estimation; but either their minds did not comprehend those measures necessary to be pursued, in order to effect their wishes, or they were apprehensive of incurring the displeasure of their government:

I trust, however, they will not be offended if I inform them, that before they can expect others to adopt their opinions, they must, by example, prove their sincerity; that if they wish their country should rank as an independent kingdom, and find in itself its own resources; if they wish it to become prosperous and great, they, as the nobility of the realm, and as great landed proprietors, must attend to the happiness and the welfare of their peasantry; must reside on their own estates; must shew a strict attention to justice; must consult the interests of those dependant on them, and in their own conduct shew that respect for the laws of their country which would give them a right to demand it from others. Let them improve the agriculture of their country, and increase the number of their tenants by dividing their estates, and by bringing into cultivation every acre of land: they will then have a right to redress the grievances of their country; nor will it then be necessary to look to foreign powers for aid and assistance. Every heart, and every hand, in Sicily, would be ready, under a good government, to defend their country.

But let the Sicilian nobles recollect, that it is not by an inactive life at Palermo that they can become the liberators of their country: no---it is by a life of activity, toil, and danger: and when in their own conduct they set an example of virtue and valour; when they give

freedom to their numerous dependants ; then, and then only, they will have a right to demand the blessings of liberty, under a free government.

The second party, which I call the English, comprises three parts of the population of the country ; not merely men of rank and education, who esteem us as a nation, and wish their country the same advantages that we ourselves enjoy, but nearly all the middling classes of society, who labour under the disadvantages of a government that wants energy to attend to the happiness of its subjects : in short, all those who like our laws, and would wish to enjoy the benefit of them. And here I must be particularly allowed to dwell on the good faith of our own government, and endeavour to disprove an assertion so general at home—that we are compromising the honour and integrity of our country by our conduct towards the Sicilians.

We originally promised the Royal Family of Naples that we would not take possession of Sicily for ourselves, but hold it in trust for them, and that we would assist them with men and money.

For several years we have supported an army in Sicily, at an immense expence : we have paid them four hundred thousand pounds per annum, and have honourably fulfilled every promise we made. Had we wished to take

possession of Sicily, no difficulty would have arisen. I can declare, from actual observation, and the sentiments of others, that we need only to have hoisted the English standard at Messina and Malazzo; to have issued proclamations, declaring that we would give them our government and our laws, and would not interfere on points of religion, and they would have joined us on every side: nor could the Sicilian government have prevented this. The populace at Palermo were equally ready to join us, equally attached to us. And why did we not take advantage of this? Why! because we estimated public faith above public advantage: and I should hope such conduct has had the happy effect of removing all jealousy from the mind of a very exalted personage. It will be said, that we have at last interfered, and that, in fact, we are in possession of the country. This is not exactly the case: some interference, indeed, was become absolutely necessary. Public dissatisfaction at the measures of government was so great, that a revolution would, in all probability, have been the consequence of our remaining inactive; and, even when I was there, the common language was—"You are come into this country to protect us. Of what use is your protection, if we cannot derive any advantage from it? We are labouring under all the evils of a bad government: any alteration would be for the better; and we would rather be without you, if you will not produce a change in the measures pursued."

What answer can be made to this? Added to which, the late banishment of some of the princes, men deservedly popular in the country, and who, in the late parliament, asserted the rights of the people, produced such general indignation, that I am convinced, had we acted differently, from the line of conduct since adopted, the French would now have been in Sicily. And can any one say we ought to suffer this, and allow our brave army to be driven out of it, after the enormous expence we have been at in defending the island for so long a period? I am certain they cannot. It will be seen hereafter that I have a much better opinion of the Royal Family than many of my countrymen; but I do not conceive we could have acted otherwise than we have done. If the King, or the Queen (no matter which), were misled by men whom they both conceived their friends, but who in reality were in the French interest, were we to be equally blind to our own interest as well as their's? I am certain, but for the English, the Royal Family would long since have been dispossessed of their dominions.

No country has been worse used, in general, by its allies, than England; and I must say it is my own opinion that our ministers owe it to their country, not to allow all our efforts for the protection of Sicily to be thrown away, merely because there are persons whose

interest it is to create jealousy and dissatisfaction between the two countries.

The third party comprises those who are wholly and entirely in the French interest. It includes a great many foreigners, as well as natives, either men who have nothing to lose, or those who, being of high rank, but ruined fortunes, wish to see Sicily a province of France; hoping, in the ruins of their country, to lay the foundation of their own greatness; men, who, lost to every generous sentiment that does honour to human nature, can forget their country; in short, every thing but themselves; whose hearts are solely engrossed by the gratification of their own vicious appetites, and who, so long as they can live a life of luxury and dissipation, care not what means they pursue to enable them to follow it.

This is not an overcharged picture: such characters are, unfortunately, too often met with; and they are most dangerous under a bad government; as it is only then such men will be able to bring themselves into notice.

In the fourth party are comprised the government, and all attached to it. This party is more numerous than the first and third, but by no means equal to the second. At the head of this is the Queen. As I purpose speaking

of the Royal Family in a separate chapter, I will, in this place only remark of Her Majesty, that I firmly believe she has been greatly traduced; that her abilities are great; and that the King allows a considerable part of the affairs of government to be regulated by her. Many Neapolitans who accompanied the Royal Family from Naples, or have since escaped; many Frenchmen, who have made this country their retreat; and all those Sicilians who approve the measures pursued, are also included in this party.

I am not one of those inclined to believe that the Queen of Sicily, exalted as she is by rank, being the sister of the late Queen of France, and daughter of an Empress of Germany, can ever intend to sully her great name by giving up Sicily to the French; more particularly when it is considered that Buonaparte has a personal enmity to her: and I disbelieve the assertion of her ever having had such an intention. I am aware that the Queen has shewn a jealousy towards the English, and has not done that justice to us which our disinterested conduct has merited: but this arises chiefly from bad advisers, who influence her mind by relating circumstances not founded in fact; and still more by the manner in which, some years back, her private character was represented in our public prints, making her devoid of all regard to morality, and representing her as setting

an example, in her own person, of every thing vicious and disgraceful.

I am inclined to believe that many of those accusations against Her Majesty were either much exaggerated, or wholly founded in misrepresentation. I have had opportunities of knowing instances of her goodness, her humanity, and her beneficence, which would do honour to private life, still more to one whose exalted station might be supposed to have made her forgetful of the wants and necessities of others.

At the same time, the Queen, I trust, will permit me to remind her that as we live under a free government, this liberty of writing cannot be prevented; that personal animosity will sometimes get the better of regard for fact; and that, in a country where the conduct of our own royal family is as much canvassed as that of a private individual, she cannot be surprised that our press will also take the liberty of canvassing that of other sovereigns.

This public abuse of the Queen's character was, however, productive of an unfortunate effect on her mind, inducing her to think that all the English hate her. May I be permitted to assure her that such is not the case; that there are many Englishmen who feel for her misfortunes, and who can make allowances for errors, which all human

nature is subject to, and which in her own case have much oftener originated from the head than the heart. Will Her Majesty permit the author to assure her that such are his individual sentiments; and that in writing this book he is chiefly influenced by a desire of promoting sincere friendship between the two countries, and removing from Her Majesty's mind those sentiments of distrust, which he feels certain that his countrymen do not generally merit?

Having thus slightly noticed the political state of the country, it only remains for me to remark the evident dissatisfaction of the people at the conduct pursued by their government. That discontent did exist, I believe every person who has been in the country will allow; and the government were themselves perfectly aware of it. Their army they could not place much reliance upon. The exact amount of the land forces I am not acquainted with; but I believe it did not exceed twenty thousand, and of these the Neapolitan guards, which the Royal Family brought with them from Naples, were the only troops that could thoroughly be depended upon, in their attachment to their interests. The Prince Butero, who is of the highest rank in Sicily, was the only man whom the militia of the kingdom would have at their head. This prince is deservedly popular: all hats are down to the ground when he appears in the

streets ; but unfortunately his excessive corpulency, and consequent inactivity, preclude his being of that service in redressing the evils of his country that I am inclined to believe he otherwise would be ; and I also fear that the government are too jealous of him, and that without a cause, for he never has taken the least advantage of the high favour he stands in with the people.

In every thing that I have hazarded relative to the political state of Sicily, I have endeavoured to be wholly unbiassed by private feelings, nor have I related more than what actually fell under my own observation. I heard many circumstances, and many anecdotes, which, if mentioned, would have represented the Sicilian government as not much to be depended upon as our friends ; but as they were told me in moments of confidence, and were not sufficiently authenticated to make them entirely depended upon, I thought it would neither be honourable to my friends, or just to a country where I was well received, to give publicity to them : and I am well convinced that with most of my readers this will be considered quite a sufficient excuse for leaving them unnoticed.

I confess I have acquired a considerable degree of regard for the Sicilians : I found them to possess many amiable qualities. I went amongst them as a stranger,

without any particular recommendation, except that of being an Englishman : but this was sufficient. I found many of them men possessing the most refined manners, endowed by nature with excellent natural abilities ; though I must confess their education is not always attended to sufficiently. I found the women amiable and unaffected ; and, notwithstanding general opinion originating from the freedom of manners allowed, many of them virtuous, affectionate, and well-informed, their education being more attended to than that of the men.

I do not mean to affirm that this is always the case. I well know it is not ; but one must not, from particular examples of vice and immorality, censure a whole people ; and at all events I shall be happy if I can, in any degree, remove a very common, though erroneous opinion, that the freedom of manners abroad, which an Englishman is not accustomed to at home, is the consequence of confirmed vicious habits ; and, that, because the customs of a country are different from our own, there must be an entire absence of all virtuous principles.

To return from this digression, for which I hope I shall be excused. I conceive that any unprejudiced person will allow, that in a country so divided in itself, it was absolutely necessary to take some steps to secure the safety of our own army ; and at the same time to protect the Sicilians.

It must be remembered, that the party, much the most numerous, attached to the English, was composed of men who wished well to their country, and who were desirous of seeing the numerous abuses, under which they laboured, rectified, most of whom would have preferred any change to their present state; and that if we had not interfered in their favour, they would have preferred even a French government to their own. This was the general sentiment; which, to Englishmen, was not much disguised. If it is also considered that the banishment of the princes, who were all men attached to England, was a measure equally as displeasing to the people as it was a mark of jealousy towards us; and if we reflect that these men depended on our interference to restore them to their country and friends; how, I ask, could we have acted otherwise? Had we abandoned these noblemen to their fate; had we allowed ourselves to have been thus injured in their persons, what dependence could the people have placed in us afterwards?

It was from these circumstances that we were obliged to interfere. The whole country was in a state of dissatisfaction; and the sending our troops to the capital was a measure of absolute necessity to save the government. The Sicilians are not born to be slaves, and if they say---“ Assist us in the cause of liberty, and the

procuring our country a good constitution, or we will do it by ourselves," are we to be censured in a cause of so much importance to our own interests, if, whilst we remain firm to our promise of being a friend and ally to the King of the Two Sicilies, we at the same time, at the united request of a whole people, endeavour to redress their grievances, and to assist them in recovering their ancient rights and liberties? And this, not merely for our own advantage; for had that been our only object, a change would have happened long ago—but because, had we acted otherwise, the people would have been in a state of anarchy, and the government destroyed.

I am fully convinced we never shall, unless compelled by the conduct of government, attempt to take possession of Sicily for ourselves. Such a mode of proceeding would be incompatible with the glory of a great and generous nation.

Let the Sicilian government act towards us without jealousy or distrust, and there is no doubt that both the ruler and his people will long have reason to bless the anniversary of that day which brought the English into their country.

CHAPTER IV.

DEPENDANCE OF MALTA ON SICILY.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LATE STATE OF THE COUNTRY AND SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF THE ENGLISH.—THE DEMAND FOR ENGLISH MANUFACTURES.—BRITISH MERCHANTS.—FEMALE EDUCATION.—SICILIAN LADIES.—ANECDOTES.—RECEPTION OF THE ENGLISH.—SICILIAN LANGUAGE.—SPECIMENS OF THEIR POETRY.—ADVICE TO TRAVELLERS.

IN no way is Sicily of more importance to Great Britain than from the dependance in which Malta is placed on her for every thing she wants. I have been told, and have every reason to believe it true, that unless our relations with Sicily were amicable, and her government friendly to us, we could not retain Malta. These are not the times when that island can be in the hands of a neutral power. The French, where their interest is concerned, pay no respect to friends or foes; and the instant Malta should cease to be garrisoned by English troops, that instant would the French, either by force or bribery, get possession of it; and then farewell to our Mediterranean trade for ever.

From what I saw of Malta, and I visited every part of it, the cultivation of the island seemed excellent. It

had the appearance of a garden---all that industry could do was effected ; but I understood, from the inquiries I made, that its produce is very inadequate to its consumption ; and this may easily be credited, when we consider the population of the country, the great influx of strangers, and the amount of our army, which is seldom, if ever, less than five thousand men.

Provisions of different sorts are sometimes procured from the coast of Africa ; but the distance is considerable, and the supply uncertain. Some things necessary to the island are also got from the Levant ; but the greatest part of the provisions required for the army and navy are either procured from Sicily, or sent from this country. The possibility of England alone supplying Malta with provisions, at such a distance, remains to be proved. The expence this would occasion to the country, even if practicable, must be evident to every one ; and as far as my own opinion is founded on observation, I do not think it would be practicable to continue it.

The importance of Malta, as a naval station, is so generally known, that I shall not dilate upon it. It is only necessary to remark, that whatever nation possesses it must command the Mediterranean and Levant trade ; that this commerce is capable of being improved to the highest degree, and would, if attended to, open the road

for our manufactures to the most remote parts of the Archipelago.

In regard to the demand for our manufactures in Sicily, it is considerable, and will certainly become more so. When we first sent troops to the defence of the country, I have been informed that there was scarcely a well-dressed person to be seen amongst the middling and lower classes of society; but I can now declare, from actual observation, that I never saw in any country, not even in my own, people who were so generally well dressed. Notwithstanding the extreme heat of the country, our fashion of dress is followed. English cloth is universally worn; and a silk coat, except at court, is almost as rare as in London; whilst every kind of necessary for their domestic establishments is not only on the English model, but also procured from England.

What the exports from this country to Sicily amount to I have never inquired; but I am well convinced they must be very considerable, and will be still greater, whenever the political relations of the two countries are finally settled. There are several English merchants who reside at Palermo, men, whose liberal and honourable mode of acting cannot fail of producing the best effects, and tend to the removing that mistaken idea---that a merchant does not rank so high in society as a

nobleman or gentleman---an idea which holds good least of all towards an Englishman, in whose country trade is honoured and respected; and where, taking them as a body, there is no class of men, whose principles and liberality, honour and humanity, are superior, or even equal to their own. They have ever been the support of their country, and in the hour of necessity have ever been found ready to assist their government, though at the risk of their all. In regard to those merchants resident in Sicily and at Palermo, they keep open house for their countrymen, and live on terms of the greatest friendship with the inhabitants.

The Sicilians are still unable to conceive how a merchant can rank so high as themselves; but they forget our free government---forget that it is education, sense, and conduct, which constitutes a gentleman; and that there is no station, however exalted, that the lowest peasant in this country, much more an English merchant, may not aspire to, if he possesses abilities and good conduct.

In Sicily, education is so much neglected in the higher ranks, they know so little of past events, are so unacquainted with the history of their own country, and so wholly ignorant of that of others, that though they see the advantages of our constitution, and would wish to possess the same, yet they neither understand or com-

prehend it. This is the reason that an English gentleman abroad is immediately dubbed a nobleman. How would a Sicilian prince be surprised, if he was told there were many men in this country who would not accept a title, who are prouder of the name of an English gentleman than all the titles in the world! He would listen, and the politeness of his country would make him assent to what was said, but he would not believe it.

It is difficult to account for the little attention paid to the education of the Sicilians in those acquirements which are necessary for every man to be acquainted with, whose station in society is such as to render it at all probable that he can be of use to his country. How is a man to redress or contend against the abuses of an absolute government, if he is not acquainted with the history, laws, and customs of his country?

A Sicilian nobleman may generally be considered accomplished; his manners are agreeable, often refined; he possesses talents from nature, which appear in some shape or other: for it is rare to meet a Sicilian who does not play, or sing, or who cannot boast of some acquirement, which will contribute to the pleasures of a mixed society. It is from this circumstance that society abroad is so agreeable. In our own country there is frequently, even amongst persons of the greatest information, a dead

silence, a formality that destroys all confidence. In Sicily this is not the case: there there is no formality. Every person endeavours to contribute to the amusements of themselves and others; and if a stranger is present, it is the general endeavour to make it agreeable to him. There are, however, many men in Sicily of truly cultivated understandings; and I must say, when this was the case, society held out charms not often found in this country.

It is much to be regretted that the improvement of their talents, which Nature has bestowed with so lavish a hand, is not more attended to. In some respects the Sicilians appear to understand education better than the English. Latin, which in England is seldom or ever attained to any degree of perfection, is here taught so as to be learnt with facility---almost all the priests can speak it as well as their own language; whereas, in England most boys pass the best years of their lives in endeavouring to acquire what at last they know nothing of.

The education of the women is much superior to that of the men; indeed, I think, excellent; and notwithstanding I know how contrary it is to general opinion, I think it infinitely better than our own.

In advancing this, I must be understood to mean as

Indeed. pray, at
what school were you
educated? And I think
not it was so there
Mr G. —

to its effects, not its consequences. I am well aware that a perfectly virtuous woman, ignorant even of the name of vice, is more liable to be led into error than one who by education has been taught to be on her guard against it. Innocent herself, she thinks others equally so; and such a character will not do to pass through the world—more shame to us that it will not!

In Sicily, girls are placed at a very early age for education in convents, which differ in expence according to the rank of the person admitted, but which are all the same in principle. Here every thing that surrounds a young person is good and virtuous: she has no intercourse with the world, at least she is excluded from the vicious part of it; nor can any one have access to her excepting her own family. Her whole life is of such a nature as to make her virtuous: it is scarcely possible an improper sentiment can enter her mind.

Early rising, and early retirement to rest, give her health and cheerfulness: the duties belonging to the Catholic religion give her habits of temperance and forbearance: her time is constantly employed, and her amusements are innocent. She is not allowed to visit her friends more than once or twice a year; and even then she must receive permission. At these times she is always with her mother; if not, with some governess, who

never leaves her unguarded. She is never left alone in mixed societies, nor early introduced into them ; and she is taught every accomplishment, if not to perfection, at least so as to render her an intelligent, amiable, and agreeable companion.

I cannot imagine any thing more virtuous, more innocent, than a young woman who has been thus educated, leaving her convent to return to her friends.

I have no doubt that my readers will think my description erroneous, because they have been accustomed to hear exaggerated pictures of Italian morals, and because the manners of the married women do not coincide with this account ; but I can explain this in a way which I hope will prove satisfactory.

I have already remarked that the women are very superior to the men in information, owing to their education being better attended to : they are equally so in regard to morals.

The moment a Sicilian lady is arrived at that age when she can be married, her family (if such is their intention) look out for some suitable match in rank and fortune : the parents consult, and the parties themselves

are married, before they have had time to become acquainted with each other.

If both parties were equally amiable, equally virtuous, this might not be of much consequence: love and esteem, in that case, might follow after marriage; but where virtue and vice meet together, the consequence is inevitable. The pursuits of the husband are incompatible with those of the wife: he takes no pains to gain her affections, or study her disposition: she becomes disgusted, and finding some other person, of more refined manners, who treats her with kindness, delicacy, and affection, she chooses him for her lover, and thinks herself excused by the example of others, and the conduct of her husband: and I must think, if conjugal infidelity is ever capable of an excuse, it is under such circumstances.

As to the idea that women in Sicily have no regard for virtue or morality, it is a mistaken, illiberal opinion: I am convinced those who possess it can never have associated with the virtuous and respectable part of society, but must constantly have lived with the lowest of the low. For myself, in my intercourse through life, I have rarely, if ever, met with a woman entirely divested of virtuous principles in any country; even if she was, still she possessed regret at being so..

In regard to the Sicilian ladies, I will mention what happened to myself. A few days after my arrival at Palermo, I was invited, in common with other Englishmen, to a ball at our minister's (Lord Amherst), to celebrate the King's birth-day. As a stranger, I naturally asked questions, and inquired of those around me the names of the persons I saw. How was I astonished at the description given of them! There was scarcely one that was not represented as infamous.

For some little time I believed this to be the case, till I had time to make my own observations, by becoming intimately acquainted with many of them: I then found how erroneous, how unjust was the description. They possess openness of manners, candour, frankness; and the habits of their country allow great freedom in conversation. If they like the manners and society of a stranger, they will walk with him, and permit him constantly to be with them; but whoever, presuming upon this, might venture to take any liberties with them, would find that there is virtue in Sicily as well as in other countries.

In no country is it more difficult to form an attachment than Sicily; I mean a desirable one. That there is a great deal of vice in Sicily is a melancholy truth; and, from the bad example of the higher ranks, it is very

general amongst the lower classes of society ; but still there are many instances of virtue ; and this virtue is respected.

It must also be allowed that the sublimer virtues, though at present in some degree dormant in the Sicilian character, are not by any means extinct, requiring only time and opportunity to bring them to full perfection. There are two anecdotes illustrative of this, which, as they are well authenticated, must not be considered as mere romances, but as facts delineative of the national character.

It has generally been found that the real passion of love is one of the strongest incentives to virtue, and to all those finer feelings, which, by raising the beloved object above all the common pleasures of life, teach philosophy and magnanimity to a mind the most uninformed—a truth most strongly exemplified in the conduct of a rustic youth, who was, by birth, the eldest son of a nobleman, who, with the title of Prince, and a large fortune, ranked amongst the first families of the city of Palermo.

This nobleman was in early life attached to a young lady, his equal in birth and fortune : the consequence of this affection was, that *honour*, as well as love, bound

him to marry her; but not soon enough to save her *honour* and reputation. As a son was born a very short time after their union, pride and shame gained the ascendancy in their breasts over the feelings of parental affection: in order, therefore, to guard against suspicion, and to prevent the possibility of scandal, it was determined that her illness should remain a secret, and the infant be placed in a retire situation with a peasant's family, on an estate in a distant part of the island, where, unconscious of his birth and rank in life, he might be brought up in a safe obscurity; his parents trusting to time for other pledges of matrimonial affection, and for an heir to their estates. The plan of concealment was so well arranged, that the secret remained undiscovered, until the unhappy mother, suffering under all the pangs of an accusing conscience, disclosed it on her death-bed. Her confessor, as an act of justice, refused her absolution, until she had made her avowal public to the family, and had her son recalled from his retirement, and acknowledged as the legal heir.

This immediately took place; but notwithstanding the change of situation, and the brilliant prospect before him, the rustic prince displayed little joy at his elevation in society; assuring his new friends he would not accept of rank and fortune, unless he was permitted to share

them with a lovely, though humble peasant's daughter, to whom he had long pledged his affections.

This, however, was a request which his family would not grant: upon which this virtuous and magnanimous youth immediately resigned his princely claims in favour of his brother; preferring to seek for happiness with a virtuous and beloved rustic, in a situation of industrious mediocrity, to the luxuries of elevated life, with a heart torn with contending passions. This is an instance of the union of magnanimity with virtue: but another may be mentioned, where the former was as intimately connected with vice.

In the early part of the last century, when robbery was a kind of trade in Sicily, and when, from the bad state of their police, large armed bands carried on a system of predatory warfare over nearly the whole of the island, one of these detachments was commanded by a man worthy of a better fortune, of the name of Testalonga. The father of the lieutenant of this chief fell into the hands of the civil power; and soon after, the lieutenant himself, by name Romano, also became a prisoner. Notwithstanding the endeavours of the latter to conceal himself, it was soon known that he was Testalonga's lieutenant, when the magistrates applied to his father, offering

him his liberty, if he would prevail on his son to betray his chief into the hands of justice.

As soon as the old man related the circumstance to his son, the struggle between filial affection, and the honour due to the solemn pledges of friendship, became violent in the breast of Romano; but the latter feeling became most powerful, from the warm solicitations of the father, who conjured his son sooner to see him die, than to preserve his life by treachery.

Shortly after, Testalonga himself was taken prisoner: yet this gallant, though unfortunate man, whilst writhing under the most excruciating tortures, refused to betray the companions of his daring though unlawful exploits, and perished, the victim of his own crimes, indeed, but setting an example of heroic constancy not unworthy of imitation.

To return, however, to more pleasing subjects: it must be admitted that the ladies abroad labour under the greatest disadvantages. There are an infamous set of men, who pretend to bring messages from women who assume names of the highest rank. These men accost foreigners, and the stranger goes, and is introduced to a lady, who calls herself a princess: and when this person leaves the country, he quits it with the

conviction that the wife of a nobleman has been unfaithful. This is an infamous traffic. I have known many instances of it; and I believe it is practised in my own country; for I have met with foreigners who boasted of favours from my countrywomen, which I am well convinced they never received.

I would not have it supposed that I think morality in Sicily is superior, or even equal, to that in England---it is not the case. I firmly believe there is more virtue in my own country than in any other; nor do I think *any part* of the world can boast of women more amiable before marriage, or more virtuous afterwards, or that better fulfil all the relative duties of a wife and mother. But in doing this justice to the merits of my own countrywomen, I am certain they will not be displeased at my being the champion of their sex elsewhere, particularly in Sicily, where it has long been the fashion to say that no virtue exists.

The Sicilian language is very different from that which is spoke in Italy: it is a mixture of almost every other; and is, I think, difficult to understand. I have given a specimen of it in the Anacreontic style, which it is particularly adapted for: it was written when I was at Palermo, upon the opera dancer, Campilli.

In Lodi

Di la Siga Giovannina Campilli

Prima Ballarina

Di lu Riali Tiatru Carulina

Anacreontica.

Vanta, o Trinacria,

La tua Campilli,

Un novu geniu,

'Ntra milli, e milli,

Mentre li smanii

Balla d' Armida.

E cui nun strepita?

E cui nun grida?

Ucchiuzzi languidi,

Si la guardati,

'Ntra un focu elettricu

Vi samuzati.

E la sua grazia

Arriva a tantu

Capaci a smoviri

E risu e chiantu.

Vicina a perdiri

L' amatu beni

Cadi in deliquire,

E quasi sveni.

Poi s' alza, e smania,
Poi si cumponi,
Chi sù sensibili
St'espressioni !

A li soi lagrimi
Sciogghi lu frenu,
Scappannu l'idolu
Di lu so senu

E mentri palpita,
Mentri delira,
Mustra implacabili
Vinnita; ed ira.

'Ntra lu so tragica
Putenti maga :
Ceà si rispighgianu,
Quannu ce'è chiaga,
Li duci, e teneri
Pirduti amati,
Rinnennu amabili
Sdegnu, e fururi.

Rapiti in estasi
Milli amurini
In idda ammiranu
Ddi vezzi fini.

Chi un cori spezzanu
Cu tali arduri,
Comu l'imagini
D'un veru amuri.

A st'arti comica
Natura cedi:
Comu s'intriccianu
Ssi manu, e pedi!
E Tempu, e musica,
E lu so visu.....
E s'è di marmura
L'omu, é supprisu.

Si st'incantissimi
Facia Campilli
Nun eci rigevanu
Rinaldi, e Achilli.

Lu cchiù gueriggeru
Chi mai si duna,
L'armi deposita,
E s'abbannuna.

Cupidu, e Veneri
S'innamuraru
Di stu carattari,
Ch'un avi paru.

Anchi la reggia
DI CARULINA
Vanta cu applausi
Sta Ballarina.

Cei tocca l'anima
L'affetti movi,
E d'un angelica
Donna fa provi.

Oh comu s'agita
La fantasia!
Quanta si celebri!
Campilli mia!

Cui podesciviri
Li toi talenti!
Ai tu di Palladi
Figura, e menti.
Tu di Tersicori,
L'unica figghia,
Chi cchiu d'ogui autra
Cci rassumigghia.

In tia s'uniscinu
Incegnu, ed arti,
Tu si d'Apollini
Un geniu apparti.

Spiegghi, e faciliti,
A l'inesperti
Ninfi, chi ballanu,
Li toi cuncerti.

* Andruni Siculu

Puru a tia cedi
Tu pensi—e speculi
Cchiù d'Archimedi.

Mustri la favula

E spargi sciuri,
Batti la Storia
E fai fururi.

Si musi brillance

Mmenzu a Campilli,
Unni triunfanu
Li grazi a milli.

Unni risedenu

Li preggi rari,
Chi nun cè é geniu,
Ch'un t'avi amari.

In attistatu di Stimu
Salvaturi Radicella,

* Nato in Catania inventore del Ballo

The difficulty of comprehending the Sicilian language is, however, of no consequence to a stranger, as there are very few persons of education who cannot speak Italian. Most persons can speak French; and within the last few years the ladies have very generally learnt English: I knew several persons who spoke it extremely well. This renders Palermo an agreeable residence, as an Englishman is always certain of finding persons who understand his own language, even if he does not choose to take the trouble of learning their's.

The reception an Englishman meets with at Palermo cannot fail of being flattering to him; and notwithstanding what our enemies say, both at home and abroad, we are still better received, more respected, and more trusted, than the people of any other nation.

I must say that foreign manners are truly flattering to our national pride, and in no country more so than in Sicily. As a proof of this, I will just mention one circumstance, which is, that at their conversations, which I shall have occasion to mention hereafter, they never refuse credit to an Englishman, even when they will refuse it to a Sicilian. I only mention this as an occurrence equally creditable to both nations, as a mark of their liberality and of our honour, as I do not believe

there has ever been a single instance of this liberty being abused.

There is, in my opinion, much more congeniality of sentiment between the English and Sicilians than with any other foreigners. The latter appear to me quite a different race of men from the Italians. In no country have I seen handsomer men than in Sicily: they are by no means generally of sallow complexion, and their limbs are finely formed. In their manners and conversation they are extremely animated; and though I have already remarked that their education is much neglected, yet their many agreeable qualities often make one forget their want of solid information.

As I shall speak of the manners of the inhabitants of Palermo elsewhere, I will conclude by saying that every man who travels should divest himself of prejudice, and be ready to receive favourable impressions of the country he is going to; and if he wishes to form a just opinion of its inhabitants, he must reside with them some time, associate with them in the interior of their own families, and not trust to his countrymen for all the information he wishes to acquire, which is the case with many, who never form a single intimacy or friendship, and then return home, saying there is neither hospitality nor virtue to be found abroad.

CHAPTER V.

ROYAL FAMILY.—THE KING.—THE QUEEN.—THE HEREDITARY PRINCE.—THE PRINCESS.—PRINCE LEOPOLD.—DUKE OF ORLEANS.—HIS WIFE.—THE DUCHESS DOWAGER OF ORLEANS.—MODE OF LIVING OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.—DESCRIPTION OF THE FAVORITA.—MANNERS OF THE QUEEN IN PUBLIC.—PALACE AT PALERMO.—PAINTINGS.—ARMORY.—OBSERVATORY.—CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

IN delineating the characters of the Royal Family, I must again repeat, that I am not guided by any thing but my own opinions and observations; and that I describe things as they appeared to myself, not to others.

The Royal Family are strongly united amongst themselves, and are said to have much affection for each other.

The King has generally been represented as a very weak man, but I have every reason to believe this is not the case. There is a wide difference between great abilities and a total want of them; and the medium we must allow to him. Although the King has generally left the management of affairs almost entirely to the Queen, still he never allowed his prerogative to be encroached upon;

and no man knew better how to command, when necessary to do so. I can speak from actual observation, that I never saw greater respect shewn to any person than was always paid to the King by the Queen: he has been reproached, indeed, for being fond of trifling amusements, when he ought to have been attending to state-affairs. How far this may be true, I will not decide: he certainly is extremely partial to hunting, shooting, and fishing; but I do not see why these pursuits are incompatible with his duty as a sovereign, or that they can, with any justice, be imputed to him as faults.

The King's personal appearance is, I think, much in his favour: he appears considerably younger than he really is, owing to the regularity and temperance of his life. His countenance, marked by expressive features, has much benignity in it; and if he was a private person, would, I am convinced, inspire confidence and regard.

As to the ability he may actually possess, I will leave those to decide who have had opportunities of knowing him intimately: I can only say, his countenance does not denote any want of it.

His Majesty is very regular in his way of living, dines early, and takes a great deal of exercise, though latterly

his ill-health has in some measure deprived him of the pleasure of field-sports. He chiefly resides at Palermo, though he often visits the Favorita, situated at a little distance from the capital: he is fond of society; and, I believe, seldom passes an evening without playing at cards. In short, all his amusements are harmless and innocent, easily gratified, and that without injury to others. That the King has not paid that attention to the welfare of his subjects, and the improvement of the country he reigns over, which he might have done, is certain; but where will be found an unlimited monarch who will do away abuses, and propose reforms, at the expence of his authority? It is these very abuses that render him absolute; and I do not think we have any right to censure the King of Sicily for a mode of conduct which has so long been pursued by almost every crowned head in Europe.

In describing the Queen, I am indeed conscious of undertaking a very difficult task. We feel interested for Her Majesty in many points of view; but particularly as the daughter of the famous Maria Theresa, Empress of Germany, and as being the sister of the late Queen of France, the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. She was not originally intended for the King of Sicily: it was another sister, who died of the small-pox. The Queen of Sicily was then only fifteen; and it is well known that she did every

thing in her power to avoid the proposed marriage, but in vain. This repugnance is not supposed to have originated from any other motive than the melancholy fate of her sister, which she considered as an ill omen. She must, when young, have been handsome; but now her countenance bespeaks an acquaintance with misfortune, which has dimmed the lustre of her eyes: her hand and arm are still remarkably beautiful: in height, she is of the proper female standard, rather inclining, latterly, to *en bon point*.

Nothing can be more fascinating than her manners when she chooses: I have had opportunities of seeing her in large companies, when she contrived to please all. It may naturally be supposed that habit enables her to disguise her real sentiments; but this is ever the case at courts: they are not the places to find sincerity.

No one has been more severely censured than the Queen of Sicily; and in many instances I think unjustly. She has through life been a most kind, affectionate mother, and thoroughly attached to her children; and whatever her conduct may have been as a wife, she at least pays every outward mark of respect and attention to her husband. I do not think it is fair to deprive Her Majesty of every claim to virtue, because illnatured

anecdotes of her have been circulated ; many of which, perhaps, are greatly exaggerated.

The Queen is generous in the extreme ; nay, she even gives away what is absolutely necessary for her own support : she leads a retired life, pays great attention to public affairs, and has been strongly accused and suspected of attachment to the French cause : but I do not believe this. There certainly was a constant intercourse between Palermo and Naples : couriers were often arriving ; and Her Majesty was greatly to blame in not making our minister acquainted with their contents, as it had a suspicious appearance ; but from all I could learn on the subject, this correspondence was merely kept up with her partisans at Naples, men who were once her subjects, and might, from attachment, be inclined to favour her interests.

The Queen certainly possesses one great fault : it is an extreme regard for the Neapolitans, and love for Naples, to which she makes every thing secondary. It is not to be wondered at, if Her Majesty should be desirous and inclined to make great sacrifices to recover so fine a country ; but I cannot think that the way to effect this is to neglect that which remains to her. On the contrary, it is evident the more attention she pays to the

interests of Sicily, the greater efforts she will be able to make to recover Naples.

The Queen has been accused of great injustice, and great inhumanity; and I have heard many anecdotes to prove it. To counterbalance them, I can only say that I know many instances where the Queen has shewn great attachment to her friends, and disinterested generosity to those who wanted her assistance. I am not equal to the vindicating her character from the imputation of severity and occasional injustice, because I am not sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances of her life; but from what I do know, I think it more than probable her faults have been greatly exaggerated. At all events, it is unfortunate we have been such severe judges; for it has prejudiced her against Englishmen: she thinks we all dislike her; and I know an instance where she expressed this sentiment openly.

Some allowances must, I think, be made for her. Born in such an exalted station, accustomed to command from infancy, possessing from nature great talents, and these cultivated by the best education, it is not matter of surprise that she sometimes has erred; but it is not just to divest her of every good quality, because she has failed in some. I know many anecdotes both for and against her; but to relate them would oblige me to

speaking of persons who are now living in the country, might involve them in difficulties in the one instance, and in the other lead me into a disputation with persons who think differently, both of which I wish to avoid.

I am aware there are many people who have possessed means of estimating the Queen's character better than myself; I therefore leave out all positive assertions, contenting myself with relating the result of my own personal observations and opinions. At the same time, I am almost certain that any one who has had the same opportunity of seeing her, and who allowed himself to be unprejudiced by report, would form the same opinion as myself; and whatever the world may say, I shall always think, though Her Majesty may have erred, may have acted with severity, perhaps with apparent injustice, yet that the many amiable qualities, I know she possesses, tend in my opinion, and I hope will in that of many others, to counterbalance the unauthenticated anecdotes related of her by her enemies. We are all liable to commit error; and we should endeavour to judge others with the same impartiality with which we would wish to be judged. I have endeavoured to act thus, and am only sorry I cannot do Her Majesty more complete justice, by being more intimately acquainted with her character and actions.

The hereditary Prince, in person and appearance, is

like his father, only much fatter; and in his countenance he strongly resembles his mother. He does not appear much in public, at least he did not when I was in Sicily; but from what I saw of him, he appeared to be extremely pleasing and open in his manners.

His wife, the hereditary Princess, is a daughter of the King of Spain: she is a very charming woman; and I never saw any countenance which more strongly marked goodness of heart. I have seen some handsomer, but none which the eye felt more pleasure in looking at. Her person, without being very large, has that sort of *en bon point* which, I think, adds to female beauty. She has several children, and is a most excellent mother.

Prince Leopold is extremely like his father: he has been variously spoken of. He had the command of the Sicilian part of the expedition that was sent to Naples in 1809; an expedition that offended the Queen, because we did not take Naples; the reason of which is supposed to have been, that as it was found impossible to keep possession of it, to plunder it would only have been involving the innocent with the guilty; a notion which, in my opinion, reflects honour on our commanders, and ought not to have irritated Her Majesty. It had that effect, however, and she was as much displeased at the

time with Prince Leopold as she was with us: he is, notwithstanding, a great favourite with her. This prince is not married.

In the year of my residence at Palermo, the Duke of Orleans was married to a daughter of the King of Sicily. At first this match met with some opposition; but it was finally acceded to, and they are very happy together. It was not a little interesting to see the Duchess of Orleans, the widow of the late Duke who was so conspicuous a character in the French Revolution, at this court. Her conduct through life has been equally irreproachable in prosperity, as well as when labouring under the heaviest misfortunes; and she bears the latter with so much fortitude, that it is impossible to help feeling the highest respect and regard for her. I believe the Duchess now resides at Mahon.

I have been informed that when the Royal Family were at Naples, no court in Europe was more splendid; of course, much of this has been done away, but they still retain a part of it.

When they go to the Opera it is a gala-night, and everybody must dress for the occasion. On these nights, only, the theatre is brilliantly lighted up, and the *tout*

ensemble has a very splendid appearance; for in no part of the world have I ever seen people who dress better, or more magnificently.

When the royal party go any where in carriages they have six horses, sometimes only four, with attendants; but, except at night, they seldom have any guards, not even when they go into the country.

They are very fond of the Favorita, a country residence about two miles from Palermo. It is built after the Chinese fashion, and has a very picturesque appearance. The grounds are large, laid out with great taste, and well cultivated; with immense quantities of every species of game, which are almost tame. This place has not been long formed: in a few years, when the plantations get higher, it will be beautiful; even now, it is one of the most agreeable rides about Palermo.

The situation is particularly fine: it is placed in a plain, on one side of which is Monte Pelegrino; on the other, but at a greater distance, are seen immense mountains, which form the back-ground of Palermo: at the end, like a vista, are seen the towers and cupolas of the capital; on the left of which the sea is visible.

The house itself is only adapted for that fine climate,

being, from the style of the building, much exposed to the weather. There are several ways of entering, either by the ground-floor, or by a circular staircase by which there is an ascent to the top of the house, or to any of the different ranges of apartments. It forms a square, and mirandas run all round each floor. The rooms are good, the views fine, and each set of apartments are furnished in a different style. One is English; another Chinese, the paintings of which are beautiful; another after the Turkish fashion, the Ottomans, cushions, &c. of which were all presents from the Grand Seignor; and, indeed, nothing can exceed their beauty.

There are many things at this place well worth seeing; but a person should go more than once, otherwise the eye does not take notice of every thing amongst such a variety of objects.

The collection of marbles appeared to me particularly fine: there are also some very good pictures, and the paintings on the walls of all the rooms are well worth a close examination. On the ground-floor there is a very good deception: it is a room painted to have the appearance of a broken roof, with ivy hanging over it, and dripping with wet. It is so well done as to have all the appearance of a miserable damp chamber; and it is some time before a stranger, at entrance, can help fancying it feels cold.

In another apartment, where the Royal Family sometimes eat, there is a circular table, which rises through the floor, and which communicates with the kitchen, so that the company are served without the trouble of asking for any thing. Before each person is a wooden platter, near which are several labels. All that is necessary is to send down with the dish one of the labels, on which is written what is wished for, and it comes up again with a plate on it of what was ordered. The mechanism is simple and ingenious, but it appeared not to have been much used, for on looking down I observed a large rat, which had taken up his abode in it, and was walking about the framework.

There are several approaches to the house, all leading through the grounds, in which persons are allowed to ride; but dogs are not admitted.

Immediately behind the Favorita is an enclosed garden, which is tastefully and agreeably laid out.

The country on all sides offers a beautiful appearance: it is well cultivated in this direction from the capital, and is almost entirely enclosed. There are several palaces belonging to the nobility near the Favorita, well worth seeing, either for their size or their architecture: and

a stranger should not leave Palermo without having made excursions into its vicinity.

There is a degree of deference paid to the Royal Family of Sicily that is rather revolting to the feelings of an Englishman. This consists in a general stoppage of carriages the moment they appear: and when they pass, the persons within must stand up and bow, whilst even those who are walking must not only make an obeisance, but stop also until they pass. This custom ought, certainly, in a great measure, to be abolished. Nothing can be more proper than that every respect should be paid to the sovereign of a country; but I conceive this would be fully effected by persons bowing as they passed. I confess I do not see the necessity of a whole string of carriages being stopped, and this not once, but every time they go by. I have seen the Queen on the Marino at Palermo, when there have been more than three hundred carriages: she has remained there upwards of an hour, and the above ceremony has taken place during the whole time. Now, as the Marino is not more than a mile in length, it may be easily imagined how tedious this is to every one.

In regard to dress, the Royal Family are by no means very splendid: on particular occasions, indeed, I have

seen the Queen rather magnificently habited, particularly in her diamonds, which are very fine; but, generally speaking, this is not the case. The King always wears a plain blue coat, with a star; the hereditary Prince appears in the same simple costume; and their manners, as I have already remarked, are very gracious. When the Queen was pleased at meeting any person, she divested herself of all her high rank; and I have frequently seen her put her head quite out of the carriage, to kiss her hand to some particular friend. This is, indeed, a mere trifle; but I am inclined to believe that it is by these trifles the real character is discovered.

In large companies, she generally went once round the room during the evening; but if she wished to speak to any person, she rose without ceremony, like any private individual. In kissing her hand, it is customary to put one knee to the ground.

There was not much etiquette practised in her presence. I was in company with her many times, particularly at Lord Amherst's, where guards were placed on the staircase, and in the anti-rooms, and some dragoons were in the court of the palace. In the apartment where Her Majesty was, the principal ceremony consisted in leaving a space in the dance, so that no one might turn their backs to her; which must also

be attended to in walking past her : but this is the same at all courts. The Queen generally sat on a sofa, sometimes with part of her family, but more often alone, or with Lady Amherst and one or two attendants. Prince Leopold, and the Princess, now Duchess of Orleans, generally danced : there was no separate set for them, but they joined the other dancers.

When Her Majesty retired she was attended to the bottom of the staircase ; but even this she would not always allow. I heard her say one night in French, when she refused this attention, that the less ceremony she was treated with, the more welcome she should consider herself. This expression from a Queen denotes, in my opinion, sentiment and feeling.

The palace in which the Royal Family resides at Palermo is situated in a square, near the south gate of the city, at the top of the principal street. It is a large irregular ancient building, forming an immense whole of parts very discordant in architecture, being built at different times ; but contains within it a great number of apartments, some of which are very good, and command an extensive and pleasing prospect of the vicinity. The gateway did not appear to me to be sufficiently large in proportion to the magnitude of the other parts. The staircase is of very fine marble, and would be esteemed

very handsome, was it not for the customs of this country, which are not of the most cleanly nature. The chapel is well worth attention, not for its size, but on account of the Mosaic-work with which it is wholly covered.

The edifice itself is evidently of Arabic or Saracenic origin, with grey romantic towers of Norman architecture, whose solemn character is not destroyed by additions of a later date.

Formerly this was the residence of the Viceroy, at which time the noble halls, so extensive as to be calculated for the most numerous assemblies, were then occupied as courts of justice, particularly on the ground-floor.

There are some very fine pictures; but I was informed the greater part of the collection brought from Naples have never been unpacked. In the gallery there were several artists at work, copying from originals: some of them appeared to possess considerable talents; one in particular drew portraits in crayons, in the most beautiful manner. A considerable collection of paintings, taken from the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, still in excellent condition, with the colours as bright as if done yesterday, are also to be seen here. It is remarkable that the costume of the women in these pictures is as nearly as possible in the fashion of the present day, and

has, no doubt, been copied by the directors of the mode. The furniture of this palace, without being very magnificent, is handsome. The rooms are extremely well-proportioned; and if their majesties have not so much state as at Naples, they appear at least to possess quite as much comfort.

I recommend a stranger not to leave the palace without paying a visit to the private armory of the King: it is well worth his attention. His Majesty is very fond of shooting, and he possesses an excellent collection of guns of every description, and all kinds of weapons, both offensive and defensive.

Amongst many things deserving of notice, I was particularly struck with an immense sword, supposed to be two thousand years old, if not more: nothing could exceed the beauty of its workmanship. The handle represents the head of a Sphinx, made of the purest silver; the blade long, and similar to those worn by staff-officers in this country.

On the left of the palace, immediately over one of the gates of the city, is a very fine observatory, from which the visitant can overlook the whole country round the capital, and which contains a very fine collection of astronomical instruments.

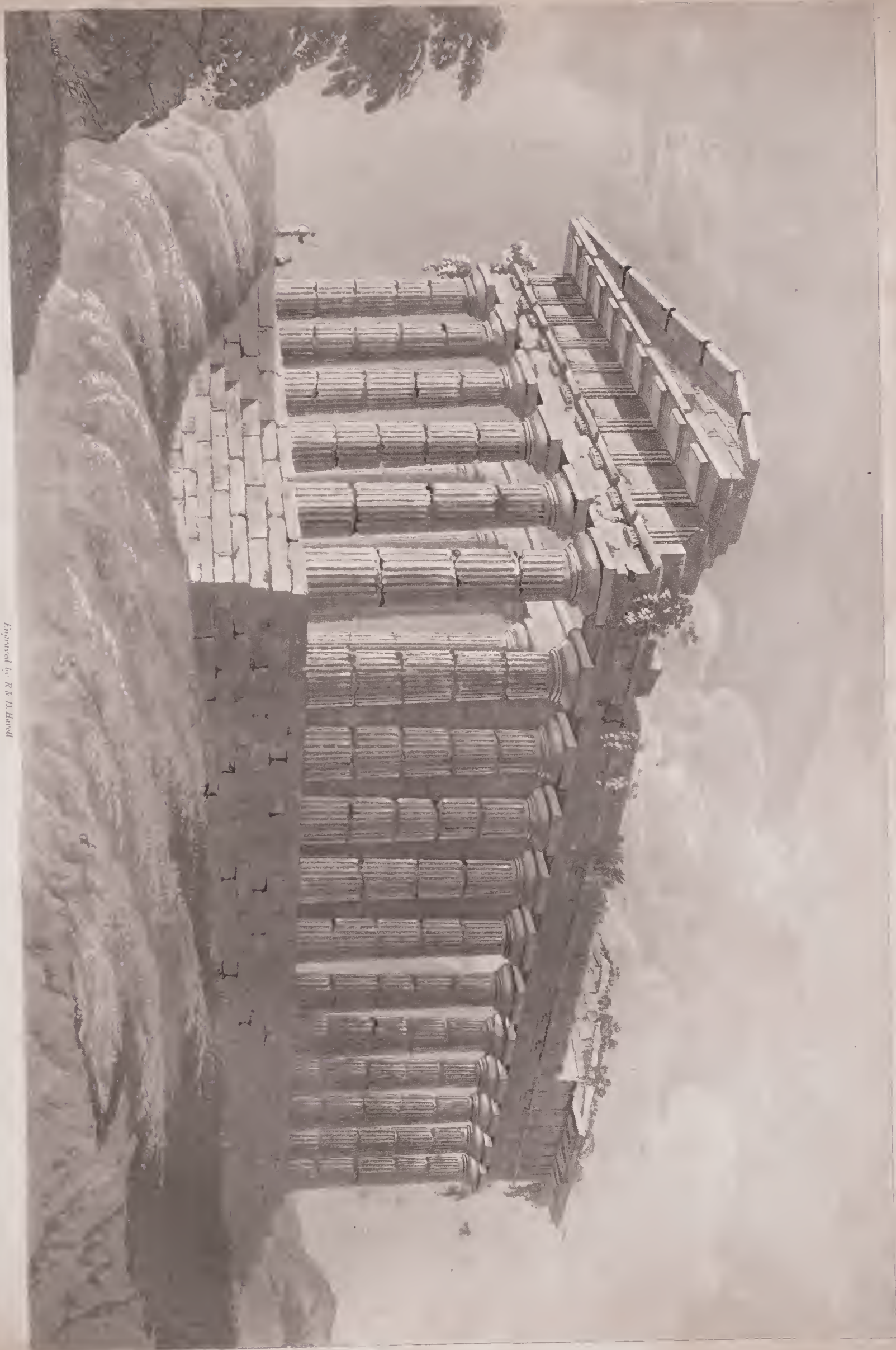
The existence of this establishment, previous to the arrival of the Royal Family, is honourable to Sicilian science. It was established by a venerable priest, Father Piazza, a native of the Valteline, who was engaged here some years ago as a teacher of astronomy; previous to which he had visited England in search of astronomical knowledge. Whilst in London, he became acquainted with the ingenious Herschel, with whom he long kept up a scientific correspondence; and, like his friend, turned his attention to the improvement of his instruments, particularly one for the observation of the heavens during the day, in which he displayed considerable abilities, but aided by the skill and acumen of our famous astronomical mechanist, Ramsden.

In these slight sketches of the Royal Family, their habits, their residence, and their mode of living, I have endeavoured, however imperfectly, to give my readers some acquaintance with them. Whether I have succeeded, I must leave to them to decide; at all events, I have strictly adhered to what I was myself an eye-witness to; and in narrating this, I have been equally particular in expressing only my own sentiments on what I did see.

CHAPTER VI.

AUTHOR'S ARRIVAL AT GIRGENTI—APPEARANCE OF THAT CITY AT SEA.—MAZARA.—REMARKS ON IT.—MARSALLA.—TRAPANI.—THE COAST, AND APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRY.—ARRIVAL AT PALERMO.—DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPITAL.

THE ship in which I left England was destined for Malta; but as it was my intention to visit that island before I returned home, I did not at that time wish to be so much taken out of my way. With a little persuasion, the captain was induced to bear down to some fishing boats that were off the coast of Sicily, one of which agreed to take me to Mazara, then not very distant, to which place it belonged. We were at this time close to Girgenti; but they would not go there. The appearance of Girgenti from the sea is uncommonly fine; indeed, it is impossible to help viewing it without considerable interest. This is the ancient Agrigentum, and was formerly the largest, the most powerful, and most populous city in Sicily, except Syracuse: of its ancient grandeur little remains but ruins: of these much may be seen from the sea, particularly on the declivity, outside of the walls of the old city, where, even at a distance,



Engraved by R & D. Howell

may be discerned one side of an ancient edifice, with thick walls formed of immense stones, with half-projecting pillars, said to be of the Doric order, and very handsomely ornamented: this is generally supposed to have been the Temple of Esculapius.

The modern city is built on the top of a very high hill, four miles distant from the sea, where the ancient Greek castle formerly stood, and encircles it almost to the bottom: in consequence it has the appearance of an amphitheatre; and the spectator is enabled distinctly to see every part of it; but it loses most of its beauty on a near approach, the streets being narrow, and the houses in general ill-built.

This town is situated in the province of Val di Mazara: it has a castle, and is the see of a Bishop, who is also Suffragan of Palermo. As the country around it is very productive, great pains have been taken to form a new port; but if one may judge from the small size of the village close to it, it has not yet answered the intended purpose. In ancient times, indeed, when their vessels were very small, it is not surprising that it should have been considered as an emporium of commerce; but it is evident, even from a passing glance, that little has been done here by Nature to form a port; and the present harbour is nothing more than a pier of three sides,

carried out a small distance into the sea, with some military defences at its projecting point.

To judge of it at a distance, its appearance confirms the report of its being admirably executed both for strength and neatness; but still it never has, and perhaps never will, possess the advantages of shelter and deep water, as it is entirely exposed to the Scirocco wind; which assists the waves, and even impels them so as to fill it up with quantities of sand.

In passing along this classical shore, it was impossible to pass a point or bay without the mournful recollection of past times, or meditating on those whose memory gave a charm to the most barren spots. Some distance from Girgenti we could faintly see by the deepening twilight the distant towers of Siacca, in ancient times famous as the Selinuntian baths, and more so from having given birth to the tyrant Agathocles, who was the son of a potter in this place: nay, the inhabitants boast of higher origin; for they assert that its baths were first discovered by Dædalus. Without imitating his flight, however, into the regions of antiquity, I can only pretend to say that its present situation seems very agreeable, rising on a gently-swelling hill, and in the midst of a country whose thick foliage consists of the orange, lemon, and fig-trees. This vicinity, too, is perhaps the most famous

in Sicily for the Pistachio-tree, which grows here in great abundance; but, as in other parts of the island, never produces any fruit, unless another of the same species, called here Scornabuca, bearing small flowers, but never having fruit, is planted near to it. It is remarkable that this custom has existed long before the sexual classification of the great Linnæus.

Of other objects, faintly seen, were some ruins on the sea-shore, supposed to be the remains of some temples of the ancient Selinuntiaë, and which the boatmen called the Pillars of Castel Vetrano, a town at some distance: very little, indeed, of them can now be seen; but the country around seems fertile in vines and olives: and if we are to give credit to the epithet, "*Palmosa*," applied to it by Virgil, it must formerly have produced the date-tree, or palm; but as to its present existence, I cannot speak.

Our boat did not arrive at Mazara till twelve o'clock at night; when the gates were shut. The consul, however, got up immediately, and received me with much hospitality, though so late. A hot supper was immediately provided, and a most excellent bed in his own house, where he insisted all my luggage should be sent. I remained here two days. This place has evidently been much larger. It is a very ancient town, and is the

seat of a Bishop. Great quantities of ruins, and large heaps of stone, formerly belonging to buildings, lay scattered towards the sea-shore; from whence the inhabitants are fond of claiming the antiquity of the ancient Selinus; an honour not allowed to them by antiquaries. Like most other towns in Sicily, it is walled all round. It has several handsome churches, some of which I visited: they contained some fine altar-pieces, a few tolerable pictures, and several very ancient monuments, of the finest oriental marble; particularly in the Cathedral, where there are three large sepulchral urns, executed in high relief, supposed to be Roman, but with obliterated inscriptions. One of these, in particular, has a most exquisite battle of cavalry, generally considered by antiquarians as executed in a grand and beautiful style, its composition being highly elegant; whilst its design, as well as its workmanship, have induced many to consider it of the remains of Greek elegance. Another is supposed to represent the story of Meleager; but they are in general too much defaced to be accurately determined.

Before this cathedral there is a square, sufficiently antique in its style of building to be picturesque: nothing of it, however, is before the Gothic ages, as no remains of Roman architecture are to be found within the walls, although that people must once have formed a numerous colony here, if one may judge from the great number of

their tombs and sepulchral inscriptions without the walls : and yet scarcely any thing is recorded of the place in the ancient history of the island.

Like many of the towns in Sicily, its external appearance is prepossessing, from the view of its several convents and religious spires, many of which are highly ornamented : yet the tourist, when traversing its narrow winding streets, does not meet with that agreeable elegance which he might have expected.

The Bishop's residence is dignified by the name of Palace : it contained nothing worth notice. The barracks, and residence of the Governor, were equally bad. Upon the whole, however, this town, from which a third part of the island has its name, is not one of the worst in Sicily : a little liberality in government would again enable it to become a place of some consequence : and whenever the laws relative to the exportation of Grain are altered, there is no doubt this place will flourish, and that the interior of their habitations will no longer display bare walls. The country immediately round Mazara is more level than it generally is in Sicily, and appears to be uncommonly fertile and rich in herbage. It may also have other sources of wealth ; for on the range of hills that divide the Val de Mazara from east

to west, the rocks present a very brilliant appearance at a distance, containing large masses of talc and gypsum. When I was there, it was just before the harvest. On every side were seen the most luxuriant crops ; and in no part of the country were the necessities of life in greater abundance: but the same oppressive system, which I have already alluded to, that tends to depress every effort of industry, has had the same effect here. Grain grows in great abundance in this part of the country: now, if the exportation of it was permitted, without the unjust restrictions annexed to the privilege of doing it, this alone would prove a source of opulence to its inhabitants, more particularly as it possesses a very tolerable harbour for small vessels: and as the distance from Malta is only twenty leagues, the supplying that island with Grain would soon render Mazara a place of considerable consequence. Sooner or later, this measure will become absolutely necessary; indeed, it is possible that since my return to England some change of this kind may have taken place; and for the sake of the finest country in the world, I sincerely hope it either has or will.

Before leaving Mazara, it is proper to notice that there has long been in this town a very humane fraternity, established for the purpose of redeeming Christian slaves: and it has been said that instances have occurred of the

members actually selling themselves, in order to pay for the liberation of others.

My first intention was to have proceeded over land to Palermo; but the difficulty of procuring horses or mules, from its being harvest-time, and the impossibility of carrying all my baggage in that manner, determined me to proceed by water.

I procured therefore an open boat, which is called a *sparonaro*: they carry from ten to twenty persons, according to their size; have one very large sail, and rise at each end with a beak, like the Roman gallies: round them runs a small ledge. They are much deeper than our boats: some have an awning at the stern; but unfortunately I could not procure one, the consequence of which was, suffering much from the heat. The distance from Mazara to Palermo by sea is about ninety miles: the charge for this was fifteen dollars, with the promise of a small additional present for civility and attention.

I left Mazara about seven o'clock on a very fine evening, with a fair wind blowing rather fresh. These boats sail extremely fast: and the coast of Sicily is so free from breakers, that they are almost always able to keep close to land.

We passed Marsala. I did not go on shore, it being too late. This is the place I have already mentioned as producing very good wine. The town lays flat; but in the back-ground are seen immense mountains. This place is also in the province of Val di Mazara: it is the ancient Lilybœum, and formerly possessed a very good harbour, anciently very famous; but it was destroyed by order of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who directed the harbour to be entirely filled up, that it might not be taken possession of by the Corsairs from the coast of Africa, as they had then generally chosen this as their landing-place to ravage the island, from the very convenient situation of its port.

I understand, that, notwithstanding its ancient origin, it possesses very few remnants of antiquity; but on the way from Mazara, a short distance before coming to Marsala, the stranger has pointed out to him some caves cut in the rocks, which are said to run five or six miles in some directions. These may have been the ancient quarries; but I had no opportunity of examining them, nor even, though close to the sea-shore, a grotto and well, over which a small chapel has been built, and which must be highly interesting to the antiquary, possessing still some of the ancient Mosaic-work, and being generally considered as the residence of the Sibyl in ancient times.

*you should be laid flat
or not writing grammar.
W. J. —*

The vicinity of Marsala might soon become rich from industry, as here, not only the best, but the greatest quantity, may be collected of that plant from which the Barilla is made. It is sometimes called Soda, sometimes Saponara, and its cultivation is very simple, being sown in spring, and cut down in the autumn, like other crops, and then burnt to ashes.

It was an uncommonly fine night, affording us a fine view of the Cape of Lilybœum, a long low point; and the moon had been up some time when we arrived near Trapani, after passing a small island, the ancient Motya, but now called St. Pantaleon. It once contained a city, said to have been built by the Phœnicians when they came to settle in Sicily, and from whence they made many attacks upon Lilybœum.

Some remnants of ancient edifices may be discerned, formed of parts of the walls with the ruins of some antique towers; but not having gone on shore, I cannot speak as to their origin; they are not, however, supposed to be of such high antiquity as the times of the Phœnicians, but rather to be of Roman workmanship, from the stones being regularly cut, and from their general resemblance to the remains of the latter people.

This town of Trapani is in the same province with

Mazara; and it has a large harbour, which is defended by a fort built on the adjacent island of Colombiera; and it is rather curious that both this port and that of Messina should have received their ancient names from their similitude to a sickle, this in particular being derived from the Greek *Drepanon*. The rocks and mountains here are immense: the town itself is built on the top of the highest, and runs downward to the foot of it, forming at the bottom another; so that from the great height of the mountain, and the separation between them, it has the appearance of being different places. It is off Trapani where the pearl and coral fishery is carried on, the latter to a considerable extent, as well as a profitable tunny fishery at the isles of Favignano and Falconieri; and here are some salt-works on a very extensive scale. The Trapanese are very ingenious in imitating antiques: some of them are extremely well done. It is also famous for the beauty of its women, whom all travellers consider as pure descendants of the ancient Grecian colonists, their features being strictly in that style, with sparkling and spirited black eyes, beaming the most enchanting vivacity, and their complexions much fairer than the Sicilian women in general, rivalling the finest of more northern regions—an excellence attributed to the serenity and purity of the air in this part of the island.

We had hardly passed a head-land, which projected

out a considerable distance on the other side of the town, before one of those gales of wind so frequent in the Mediterranean arose; and what made it still worse was its being what is called a Scirocco wind; in consequence we were obliged to shelter our little bark under the enormous mountains behind Trapani. The sailors threw themselves on the beach and slept: I preferred walking to some ruins I saw at a little distance, which did not prove very interesting; but the shadows thrown on the hills by the reflection of the moon, with not a cloud to be seen, and no sound to be heard, except the dashing of the waves, produced an effect on the mind by no means unpleasing.

In such a country as this, the ideas that press upon the imagination, even of a Tyro in classic lore, are peculiarly interesting, and prompt him strongly afterwards to further investigation and inquiry.

On this very spot Æneas landed, and here died his father Anchises; here too it was that the Trojan ladies, unwilling to encounter the dangers of the seas any longer, thought proper to set fire to his fleet, which was only saved by the miraculous interposition of the protecting goddess.

On this coast also, and amongst these mountains, the

Cyclops are fabled to have resided previous to their removal to the vicinity of Mount Etna: but it is not alone for ancient tradition that it is famous; for in later times, the Secret Council, in which the massacre of the French invaders, called the Sicilian Vespers, was determined on, was held in a tower which stands on an almost insulated rock, in a retired spot on the sea-shore.

In its immediate neighbourhood too is Mount Eryx, now called Monte di Trapani, not more than two miles distant from the town, and near whose foot we passed the night. This mountain is generally considered as next in height to Mount Etna, and on its summit are still some remains of the ancient temple dedicated to Venus, with some ruins of a more modern date, described as Saracenic. The people of the country call it San Giuliano, and seem to have lost all traces of that extraordinary mode of worship of the laughter-loving goddess, adopted here in honour of Venus Erycina. These scenes were indeed disgraceful to human nature, and are supposed to have had their origin connected with the beauty of the sex at this place, for which it seems remarkable, even in the earliest periods of history.

Fortunately, however, the pure spirit of Christianity has put a stop to these sacrifices; though, perhaps, sacrifices something of the same nature may still exist,

as the ladies here are said to be sought after in matrimonial connections from other parts of the island, many of them thereby making the most opulent matches.

Towards morning we were able to proceed: the wind still blowing fresh, and so hot as to be almost suffocating, we were soon obliged to stop again: we did not proceed till three o'clock, when the extreme heat of the sun began to decrease, and a slight breeze from the east gave a little coolness to the air.

The senses were indeed relieved a little by the contemplation of the romantic islands in the offing, Favognana already mentioned, Maritimo, and Leranzo.

The first of these has the honour of being particularly described in the *Odyssey*, the Greek poet having selected this as the place where Ulysses was driven on shore during a nocturnal gale: here too he is described as hunting the wild goats, and as having proceeded hence to the opposite coast, where he met with the Cyclops.

As Homer speaks of it as uncultivated, and gives it the epithet of woody, it is most probable that it was then uninhabited, except by the wild goats, whose descendants still range their ancient freehold, amidst some small groves of ash and poplar. At present it is inhabited, and its

simple inhabitants are principally employed in an arca-
dian life, tending their cattle and flocks, which here find
most excellent pasturage, and in preparing a highly esteemed
species of cheese, whose export might become valuable :
as there is also some corn raised, this place may be sus-
ceptible of great improvement, possessing an excellent
though small harbour, whose description from the pen of
Homer is stated to be so correct that it is evident he must
have visited this spot.

The other two islands are of considerable height, and
seemingly less adapted for agricultural purposes.

I never remember feeling so much inconvenience from
heat as during the time we were obliged to remain under
the mountains : there was not the least shade, nor had
we any shelter from a vertical sun but a sail ; and the
absence of air was worse than the effect of the sun. There
was a small house near the shore, full of ill-looking men,
where nothing of any kind could be procured. I got a
few red and white mulberries and some green almonds
from a farm-house at a little distance. They were cool
and refreshing, but I confess I was truly happy when the
change of wind enabled us to depart.

Between this and Palermo we did not again stop : the
country the whole way had the most beautiful appear-

ance: at a little distance the want of cultivation is not perceived, and the luxuriant produce of the soil, though left to nature, looks like a garden: sometimes a small village or some farm-house appeared, situated on the side of a hill or the bottom of a valley, breaking the sameness of the scene. On every side are seen enormous mountains. The appearance of Sicily is that of the sea in a storm—rock on rock, mountain on mountain: no sooner is one ascended, than another appears before the traveller, still higher. Part of the coast forms a deep bay, at the bottom of which is the town of Carina, seen from a considerable distance, being situated on a lofty hill. This is the scite of the ancient town of Hycera, where the well-known *Lais* first saw the light of day. She was taken prisoner when very young by the Athenians, who had invaded this territory under the command of Nicias. She was even then as celebrated for her beauty as afterwards for the ill-use she made of it; she was perhaps, however, more the victim of tyranny than even of her own indiscretion, as she was, along with many others of her fellow-citizens, publicly sold in the Athenian market.

On approaching Palermo the scenery becomes, if possible, still more magnificent. Monte Pelegrino, which forms one side of the bay, must be seen—it cannot be described. This does not so much arise from its height, though immense, as from its situation and extent, and the bold scenery it offers in various

directions. We arrived at Palermo early in the morning of the second day, having thus been only two nights and one day in coming the distance of ninety miles in a small open boat, ten hours of which we were at anchor under the rocks of Trapani.

A great part of this distance we were obliged to row, there being hardly any breeze; but the fatigue a Sicilian sailor will bear is astonishing: they will row a whole day, with short intervals of rest, exposed to the rays of a burning sun, with large heavy oars, at each stroke of which they rise and sit down so as to give the whole strength of the body; and to support this fatigue, coarse bread, bad wine, and a little cheese, form their chief food: notwithstanding which, they are in general large muscular men, with limbs of the finest shape, and of a great size. The contour of their countenance is expressive, and their features marked: the Greek or Roman nose appeared to me most common, with fine teeth, generally dark eyes, and thick curley hair; and though their complexions were dark, it was more the effect of exposure to the sun than any thing else. I confess I had formed a very different idea of the Sicilians, conceiving that they were a small, weak race of men; but this is only so where luxury or dissipation has enervated the constitution, which is not often the case amongst the lower classes. The Sicilians, under which name are comprised those Greeks who

View of the Port of Palermo.

Engraved by K. & D. Havell.



have retained their ancient dress and customs, and who will be more particularly described, are as fine a race of men as any in the world, not excepting my own countrymen. We must not judge of the inhabitants by those of the capital, though even there my observation would be found to hold good, but from the lower and general classes of society, which in all countries form the great mass of population. If the Sicilian government would pay some attention to education, would encourage industry by every means in their power, and the higher ranks would set an example of every moral virtue in their own mode of living, I am convinced there would not be a people in the world more capable of commanding our respect and admiration. I may be thought prejudiced in their favour: I am not conscious of being so. No person had a worse idea than myself of the present state of morals in Sicily previous to my arrival there. I have seen a great deal of it, and had many opportunities of witnessing it: but there is no rule without an exception: and there are great numbers of the inhabitants of Sicily who are good and virtuous; and the calling the attention of these to the lamentable situation of their more frail brethren, and showing what they might be, is the last remaining hope that some change for the better may be brought about. Whether that information, which is now so generally introduced amongst the lower ranks of society in this country, and which it is the fashion of the present age

to promote, will, or will not, tend to the general happiness and goodness of mankind, remains to be proved: the effects and consequences will not be felt till another century: but that some attention to the morals and education of a people is necessary, no person can deny; and it is to these I would draw the attention of the Sicilian government, as the first measure requisite to make their country rich and flourishing: and as the first step towards producing general improvement in the morals of the people, I would humbly recommend that the fine system of morality and goodness which is laid down as our duty in the New Testament should be read to them in a language they can understand. I am certain this would have the happiest effect, as it would teach them, that, although according to their tenets, good works without faith will not ensure them a passport to Heaven; yet that no faith, however great, will excuse the commission of crimes: a fact which they are almost wholly and entirely ignorant of.

The approach to the city of Palermo, from the sea, presents a most enchanting prospect. The bay itself is very extensive, and encircled in its sweep by a diversity of mountains and hills, whose various forms give an interesting grandeur to the scene. Between the beach and the foot of these hills lies a wide open plain, from whence rise, in great majesty, towers, cupolas, and spires,

in wild confusion, yet displaying a graceful symmetry. On the right hand, at the entrance, is a light-house, from whence spreads a thick grove to the very environs of the port, lining the beach for a considerable extent ; joined to which, the base of the lofty and almost perpendicular Monte Pelegrino rises above a forest of masts of the various shipping in the harbour.

This harbour, indeed, at Palermo, is not very large, but is safe and commodious, except in the north-east quarter, where it is exposed to the swell of the sea ; whilst the ships in the bay suffer great inconvenience, at times, from the westerly winds, which sometimes blow in heavy gusts from the lofty mountainous tract of country, and the valley called Il Colle.

The present harbour is not of very ancient date, as in former times, when shipping were in general very small, two long winding creeks of a considerable breadth were fully sufficient for all purposes of commerce. These were then really within the town ; but having been completely choaked up with the sand, driven in by the north-easterly gales, and washed down by the torrents, in the early part of the sixteenth century, are now entirely filled up and built over ; as in the then imperfect state of engineering it was considered that they were totally incapable of being restored to their pristine uses.

We were not long detained at the Custom-House, and were soon allowed to land. There are two hotels at Palermo, in the Piazza Marina. I went to one called the Britannica, which was much better than I expected; indeed, very comfortable, though not quite equal to those of our own country.

A stranger is much struck by the first view of Palermo, even on a nearer approach. Every house appears a palace; but the eye soon gets accustomed to this; and a more close inspection, particularly into the interior of them, soon lessens our admiration: for though the principal streets are ornamented with statues and fountains, and with many edifices, whose exterior, at a distance, seems worthy of a capital, yet most of the others are extremely narrow and winding, very dirty, and almost impassable, at times, from the badness of the pavement.

A slight historical notice of this now restored capital will not be irrelevant in marking its progress to its present state, particularly as it claims a very high antiquity; so much so, that its inhabitants, who consider their own personal consequence as depending much on that of their native place, have asserted that it was a city in the days of the earliest possessors of the Island of Sicily. Others, indeed, and even antiquaries, have not gone so far back, but have attributed its first founding to the Phœnician

merchants, who stopped here during their commercial cruises; whilst some ascribe it to the Greek colonists, or to the Carthaginians, the rivals and successors of the sea-faring merchants of Tyre and Sidon.

If we were to judge from its name, which anciently was Panormus, supposed to have been called so from the excellence of its harbour, its name and origin might be attributed to the Greeks; but then this name has been supposed to be only a change from the Phœnician appellation, particularly as it is known that it was called Balirmu, by the Arabs, or Saracens.

We may safely trust, however, to those historians who relate that the Phœnicians at first established themselves in small settlements, or factories, on the coast of Sicily, until the frequent arrival of colonies from Greece rendered it necessary for them to assemble together in some secure place; when this was chosen on account of its harbour. From them it came to the Carthaginians, who possessed it until the fifth century of the Roman era, when it fell into the hands of that enterprising and war-like people; and so attached did Palermo become to the Roman cause, that it was always applauded for its fidelity. It indeed suffered, and submitted to, all the changes and reverses both of the republic and the empire, until early in the ninth century of the Christian era,

when the Saracens attacked and took it, but were not then able to preserve it long, though they soon after recaptured it, and established it as the metropolis of their empire in Sicily; when, for two centuries, it shone in all the pride and splendour of Barbaric pomp.

From the Saracens it was taken early in the eleventh century by the Norman adventurers, headed by Robert Guiscard, and his brother Earl Roger, who here established the seat of government for their feudal domains: ever since which period, when held by the French, and even in later times, it has always been the royal residence, whilst the Sicilian sovereigns lived in the island, and at all other times the residence of their Viceroy; though Messina, as will be noticed, has of late years claimed a superiority over it.

This city, which is the capital of Sicily, is in the Val di Mazara. Its bay is formed by Monte Pelegrino on one side, and Cape Safforano on the other. The present harbour is defended by two castles, tolerably well fortified; but it is not considered capable of making any defence against an enemy. I conceive the number of inhabitants to be nearly two hundred thousand.

Palermo itself is about a mile and a half from the foot of Monte Pelegrino. High mountains form an immense

semicircular amphitheatre behind it. Nothing can be more beautiful than the view of this city from any elevated situation: the walls which formerly surrounded it are only separated from the sea by the Marino, an excellent road that extends along the coast for many miles. This city is in general built with great uniformity. There are two principal streets, which traverse the whole extent of the city, and cross each other. These are each a mile in length; and in the centre of them is a small square, called the Ottangolo. There are four gates; one at each extremity of these streets: and from the square above-mentioned the whole extent of them can be seen. From the Porto Felice, opening to the Marino, to the extremity of the Porto Nuovo, leading to Monreale, it is up-hill, which adds greatly to the beauty of this street; producing a natural kind of perspective, that has the effect, however, of making it look much shorter than it really is.

This street, terminated by the Porto Felice, is called the Cassaro, a name derived from the Saracen word *Kasir*, or Palace. The Porto Felice itself resembles a triumphal arch, and has an impressive effect at first entrance on the Marino, a favourite rendezvous of the inhabitants of the city, as already noticed.

During the heats of summer, nothing can be more de-

licious than the evening resort on this promenade, cooled by the breeze from the sea, when the stillness of the hour is at times broken in upon only by the nightly serenade.

The houses are all built to a great height, and, agreeably to the customs of this and the neighbouring countries, have balconies, guarded by iron railing, to most of their windows.

These projections, indeed, in some measure destroy the symmetry of the architecture; but this is amply made up by the convenience they afford of enjoying the cool evening breeze, in a climate generally so warm as this is. There are an immense number of churches and convents: I believe they exceed three hundred. The first time I heard all their bells ringing at once, which was a few days after my arrival, on occasion of a feast celebrated at the Madre Chiesa, or Cathedral, and at which the Royal Family were present, I was perfectly stunned. There is not any attempt at harmony, but each ringer seems to endeavour to pull his bell as fast as he possibly can.

The mode of building in this country differs greatly from our's. The ground-floor, even of the most magnificent palaces, frequently consists of shops: in each building there is a common staircase, and each stage of

apartments forms, as it were, a separate residence, being generally inhabited by different families; and this is always the case, except in the residences of some of the principal nobility.

These apartments mostly consist of a hall and four or five rooms, all communicating with one another: the number of chambers, of course, varies according to the size of the houses.

In hiring apartments, a stranger is always obliged to furnish them. When I was there, rent was very moderate to what it is in England; but I understand that since our army has garrisoned Palermo it is much dearer; and now there is hardly a house to be had at any price. Provisions of all kinds were also reasonable, and in great plenty. Meat is now not very cheap, and milk and butter are very dear: still housekeeping does not cost half so much at Palermo as it does in this country.

Servants are also a great deal cheaper; for ten dollars a month a stranger may hire an excellent man servant, and he will keep and clothe himself: this is equal to about thirty pounds a year English money. There is also some difference in keeping a carriage: if a person occupies his own stable it will cost about one hundred pounds per annum, as a very handsome carriage can be procured for

about one hundred and sixty ounces (one hundred pounds), and if not of the very best kind, for much less ; whilst a pair of good horses may be had from eighty to one hundred ounces, about sixty or seventy pounds.

If a carriage is hired it is very dear, almost as much as in London : they charge an ounce per day, or twenty-five ounces per month, which is equal to about one hundred and eighty per annum.

Wine is of course cheap : the best sort costs about sixpence per bottle ; liqueurs a dollar. They have no malt liquors ; some kinds are said not to keep in this hot climate, but English porter retains all its goodness. I conceive therefore, by proper management, all kinds might be made so as to bear the heat.

Fruit is in the greatest abundance ; and every day the finest dessert may be procured for a mere trifle.

The Sicilians are, I think, good cooks, at least I have sat down to excellent dinners. They are fond of good living, but are, at the same time, very temperate and moderate in their general habits.

The manners of the Sicilians are extremely pleasing : they are open and friendly in conversation, and many of

them keep open-house. The ladies that mix in society are in general married, but occasionally a stranger may meet with families who break through the rule of keeping their daughters at home till that even takes place; and there is a much greater degree of liberty allowed in this respect between the two sexes than in any other part of Italy.

They are extremely gay and animated in conversation, and few people carry gallantry further than they do, and that of the most delicate sort. There are instances of attachment which have continued seventeen or eighteen years. Conjugal infidelity is not attended with the same fatal consequences as it is in other countries: it seldom separates the husband and wife, nor does it disgrace children, as with us: whether this is a wise measure, or one which should be reprobated, I will leave to better judges to determine; but it certainly does prevent an infinite degree of misery.

In the interior decorations of their houses some of those of the nobility are very magnificent, but, in general, the furniture would be considered bad if in England, yet an Englishman soon gets reconciled to the habit of receiving company in a bed-room; but this is by no means a general system; nor is there any thing in it that shocks delicacy after the eye is once accustomed to it. The bedsteads are made of iron, with boards laid flat,

and upon these are placed the mattresses. This is necessary on account of cleanliness, the extreme heat of the country producing every kind of vermin in such abundance, that it is only by great attention they can be kept away; and it is for the same reason that the floors are always made of tiles or marble. The best kind of flooring is that which is waxed all over, and then painted, which forms an even surface, agreeable to the eye, and can be more easily kept clean than any other.

The rooms are all very high, generally with coved or vaulted ceilings: the most common mode is to have both the ceilings and the walls painted; and in some of the palaces these paintings are beautiful. Even in very moderate houses, and by common painters, such is the genius of the country, that they will paint a suite of apartments in an astonishing short time, and in a manner that any where else would be considered tasteful and handsome: it is only the comparison with others which makes it pass unnoticed. In some of the ancient palaces the walls are hung with damask, divided into compartments by gilding, mirrors, paintings, &c. This is seldom done at present; indeed, the former mode is much better adapted to the heat of the climate.

On the right and left of Palermo are two small tracts

of country ; that to the east is called the Bagaria, to the west, Il Colle. It is there that the country residences of the principal nobility are situated, many of which are fine ; but I shall have occasion to make an excursion there with my reader in another chapter.

The Flora Gardens are situated at the end of the Marino, going towards the Bagaria ; and behind them are the Botanical Gardens, which are well worth seeing, and contain many curious and rare plants : anybody may see them, but they are not open to the public as the Flora Gardens are.

The original establishment of this Botanical Garden arose from a garden belonging to the Prince of La Catholica, and its catalogue was therefore called Hortus Catholicus, which some have erroneously supposed to be with a reference to other causes. For a long period it was unfortunately much neglected, but of late years has been more attended to, many Asiatic and African plants, particularly the Egyptian Papyrus, having been introduced ; and a building, erected in a handsome style of Greek architecture, was originally intended for a public school of botany.

The Flora Gardens are kept at the public expence, and are open till dark. There are two gates for entrance ;

the others are kept locked, and only opened for the admission of the Royal Family. They are not large, but are laid out with great taste. Orange and lemon trees grow on each side of the walks: of these there are two principal ones that cross each other in the centre, and extend the whole length of the garden. There is also a circular walk that goes round it; and the trees in the smaller ones, which run in every direction, are brought together so as to form a shade over the head; but it is hardly sufficient, the foliage of the trees not being thick enough to keep off the sun: if they would plant a few forest trees, they would be of much more use. There are also some fine fountains in these gardens. Except on a Sunday, they are not so much frequented as one would suppose. They are, however, extremely beautiful, and, in fact, are almost the only place where one can walk at noon-day.

A handsome fountain, in particular, embellished by four temples of grotesque architecture, forms a central ornament, and presents a pleasing object from the Corso, which runs between the gardens and the bay. The prospect on all sides is delightful; and perhaps the situation becomes even more interesting, when we recollect that on this spot, now dedicated to all the ease and hilarity of social and of friendly intercourse, once existed the place of execution for the sentences of the horrible Autos de fe, that issued from the mysterious walls of the bloodthirsty

Inquisition ; an edifice fortunately no longer in existence for its former purposes, as its usurped power was abolished by his present Majesty of Sicily.

The gardens at the Prince Paterno's are also open to the public, and though smaller, are in some respects more agreeable, as there is a very fine avenue of trees, with numerous seats, which is always impervious to the rays of the sun. I shall conclude this chapter by mentioning some of the public buildings at Palermo most worthy the attention of a stranger. These are the palaces of the King and the Archbishop, the Hospital, the house which was formerly the Inquisition, but which is now abolished, the Jesuit's Church, and the Madre Chiesa. There are many others, which it is unnecessary particularly to mention, though they will be more fully noticed in another place ; for a person going to the country will soon discover what is worthy of his notice, and to readers the bare enumeration of names is, I think, even tedious,

CHAPTER VII.

DESCRIPTION OF PALERMO CONTINUED.—THE MARINO.—
MODE OF LIVING. — CONVERSATIONE. — DESCRIPTION OF
IT.—VARIOUS REMARKS ON THE STATE OF SOCIETY AT
PALERMO.—SICILIAN LADIES.—STATE OF MORALS.—CAUSE
OF CONJUGAL INFIDELITY.—EDUCATION.

THE Marino is a source of constant amusement to the Sicilians: it is a very broad road, bounded on one side by the city walls, on the other by the sea, close to which is a raised terrace, flagged all over for the pedestrians. On account of the great quantity of dust, it is requisite to have it watered; and this is done every day by men with large buckets, about half an hour before the carriages begin to appear.

On the walls of the city are seen several very handsome palaces, particularly one belonging to the Prince Butiro, near the Porto Felice; and another, where the English minister resided when I was there. The principal and handsomest entrance to the Marino is by the Porto Felice.

The Sicilians go out very little till the evening:

they dine early, and, in general, sleep afterwards: they then order their carriages about seven o'clock, which is the fashionable hour for going to the Marino; and though the example of the English has in some measure accustomed them to walking, yet all persons of any consequence have their carriages: some of the nobility keep ten or twelve.

Even twenty years ago, when there was no royal court to tempt to extravagance in this mode of expence, this custom was in full force. A traveller at that period observed, that it was not the custom for any gentleman to walk on foot; so that even then, at least one thousand carriages were kept in the city.

The English style was then the favourite; and many of the equipages were extremely elegant; it being also the fashion to use only the handsomest horses they could procure, which were always decked out with the richest harness and ornaments, and the carriages crowded behind with numerous footmen in splendid liveries.

Strangers also at that time had the convenience of very decent hackney-coaches or carriages, some covered, and some open, which were appointed for different stations during the day, similar to the mode of London and other capitals.

At the above-mentioned hour, if the evening is fine, and the day has been very hot, it is not unusual sometimes for above three hundred carriages of every description, from the most magnificent to the most shabby, to be driving up and down the Marino, full of well-dressed persons, interspersed with numerous equestrians, who shew considerable dexterity in riding very fast through such long strings of carriages; at the same time the terrace is equally crowded with pedestrians, composed of high and low. Some few get out of their carriages and walk; and it is near this terrace where they draw up, and talk to their friends; and what affords still more pleasure, this is the happy moment when lovers may meet and converse with their mistresses. The whole scene is delightfully animated, and is the amusement of every evening. The common custom is to remain here till it is dark, when they pay visits and go to private parties: at ten they drive to the Opera, then to the Conversatione; and after that to supper, either at home, or at one of the great houses, which are open every night. This is the constant life at Palermo, and it must be allowed there is no place where amusements are cheaper, society more general, or attended with so little form or ceremony.

There are two Opera-Houses at Palermo, one of which, called San Carolina, is not open till just before the Car-

nival. The two Prima Donnas when I was there, one at each theatre, were both of them above mediocrity ; and the Opera was upon the whole an agreeable amusement : but to those accustomed to an English stage, with the best singers in Europe, this will not bear much praise. I understand that the performers were formerly very good ; but the present situation of the Continent precludes the best singers from coming over.

The Conversatione is held at the Theatre San Carolina. This is a public society, open every evening, supported by the subscriptions of the nobility. It is accessible to all strangers, introduced by the nobleman who presides for the week.

It consists of five rooms, one of which is the entrance, extremely well lighted, with card tables laid out for private parties to play. Cards and lights, if called for, are paid for to the waiter ; refreshments the same ; otherwise nothing is demanded.

On one side of the largest apartment is a table covered with green cloth for general play. There are two bankers, who deal, and who have rouleaus of money near them. The bank is formed by various persons : some of the first nobility are concerned in it ; and I believe it is produc-

tive of considerable profit. The game is Rouge and Noir, or Bassette. They do not play for such high sums as in England, but I think play is more general, as ladies are not excepted. I seldom saw above twenty-five pounds put as a stake at once: occasionally I have seen fifty pounds; but this was considered very high play; and with the greatest number, dollars or ounces were the common stakes; yet a great deal of money may be lost at this game, however low the bets, as it is quickly decided. There was one nobleman, I do not recollect his name, who was said to have lost one hundred thousand crowns (twenty-five thousand pounds) at it, merely from partiality to the red colour, which he never changed. This is considered a very large sum for this country. I saw this nobleman, for the first time in his life, go on the black colour; and it is I think rather remarkable, that in a space of thirty or forty years, during which he had constantly played, he should never have done it before, considering his almost constant run of ill-luck with the other.

The bank is frequently broke; but, notwithstanding, the proprietors are said to make a great deal by it. This is considered a very fair game; but still the banker has many advantages; and it is well known that in all these games the chances are much against the player.

The manner in which the whole is conducted is creditable to the liberality of the Sicilians. I have already remarked that they never refuse credit to an Englishman ; at least, I never saw it otherwise. It may be said they do it to encourage play ; but still, if they had not reliance on our honour, they would not make it so general. An Englishman must be well known in his own country to meet with the same facility of getting any sum he might wish.

The Conversatione is always held here in the winter. In the summer a temporary building is erected on the Marino, immediately behind the Porto Felice, consisting in the same way of three or four rooms, formed with boards and canvas, and painted with great taste and neatness : it is exactly the same, as to regulations, as at the other resort. There are balls at both once a month, or once a fortnight.

The largest of the two opera-houses at Palermo is built in the shape of a semicircle ; and the regulations of the operas here differ materially from our's. No women are admitted into the pit ; and there is no gallery, that space being all fitted up as boxes. The price for admission is very trifling for going into the pit, being no more than four taris, or twenty-pence English, and one taris more for a cushion to each seat. Each person has

an arm-chair to himself, by which means the audience are not crowded; and if any person takes another's seat, he must restore it. The expence for a box is from four to eight dollars: the best situations are in general private boxes. The scenery and decorations are not very good; and the dresses, except those of the principal performers, very indifferent.

The Theatre San Carolina, though smaller, is in my opinion built on a much better plan: it is in shape a complete horse-shoe, which is certainly the best adapted for hearing and seeing, and it is painted in a very beautiful style. The price for admittance, dresses of the performers, and decorations of the stage, are the same as at the other.

It is only on gala-nights that these houses are lighted: at other times every person is obliged to furnish a light for his own box. This certainly destroys all effect.

There are two or three houses at Palermo open every night to company. At the Prince Butiro's the supper-table is always laid for thirty people: the Prince Parterno's is also the same. The former is one of the first noblemen in the country, both for rank, power, and wealth. I have already said that he is very popular: his annual income is supposed to be sixty thousand pounds per annum, an immense fortune in Sicily. He

is, however, much in debt. This arises from circumstances I am not fully acquainted with ; but I believe that he was indebted to the Neapolitan Government, and thus when the Royal Family were obliged to quit Naples, this became a debt to the King. I do not vouch for the truth of this ; I only mention it as it was told to me.

The Prince lives in the most magnificent manner, in a noble palace looking on the Marino : he is liberal, hospitable, and generous, and shews very great attention to all Englishmen.

He has been married twice : his present wife is a very beautiful woman. His daughter, by a former marriage, is the Princess Leonforte : she is said to have been so beautiful, that persons came from all parts to see her ; and from her present appearance I can very well conceive it. She has been a widow some time : her daughter is married to the Duke de Chiamastro.

The Prince Paterno lives much in the same manner : he gives very excellent dinners. His palace is one of the most magnificent and best furnished of any in Palermo : it is, however, difficult, amongst the numerous residences of the nobility, to say which is the finest. The Prince Cassaro's, now Prime Minister, the Prince Belmonte's, the Prince Palagonia's, the Prince Carigni's, the

Prince Trabiea's, and the Prince Grammonte's, are all most magnificent. At the same time, I do not think there are any of them who live with so much style and comfort as an English gentleman or nobleman of equal fortune. Except on particular occasions, their servants are not so well dressed, nor are their carriages, horses, &c. to be compared to our's.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this system of life in a few of the richest of the Sicilian nobility produces much popularity, which, if properly applied, might render them extremely useful to their fellow-citizens, by their example. The extent to which this popularity may be carried, no doubt, must have excited jealousy in the Court, whilst resident at Naples; but as under the present regime better things may be hoped for, it will not be irrelevant to elucidate it by a slight detail of an event well known about forty years ago.

The ancestor of one of the princes already mentioned was a nobleman of plain good sense, and of a benevolent and patriotic turn of mind. He held the office of Prætor, or Supreme Civil Magistrate, and executed his trust with the strictest attention to the welfare of the State, and the comfort and happiness of his fellow-citizens. To their complaints he always listened, and administered justice with an even hand; their wants he relieved, and

his whole conduct was influenced by honest impartiality, and his official duty executed with promptitude.

A conduct so virtuous could not fail to excite the suspicions of those whose own hearts were guided by sinister motives, and who accordingly attributed the same to him. It was evident, however, from all his conduct, that the ambition of becoming popular was not so much his wish, as the desire of gratifying his honest patriotism with the public esteem and consideration, both of which he so deservedly had acquired.

The lower order of society long considered him as a paternal protector ; and their love was even exceeded by their veneration, in consequence of some striking instances of his regard to justice, in opposition to rank and influence.

He had thus gone on advancing rapidly in the good opinion of his fellow-citizens, when an event took place which increased it considerably. This arose from a very scanty harvest having obliged the Senate of Palermo to lay in a stock of corn for public use ; but unfortunately they had no funds to do it with, whilst the Viceroy, asserting that their security was bad, refused to assist them from the royal treasury.

On this occasion, the benevolent nobleman immediately raised the sum necessary, and advanced it at his own risk, taking all chance of loss upon himself. He was then hailed as a benefactor and saviour, but unfortunately lived a very short time to enjoy this additional popularity; for being attacked by a fit of the stone, the Viceroy's surgeon was called in, who performed the necessary operation; but his death became inevitable.

Prayers were immediately put up to Heaven for his recovery, and all the Saints in Heaven were invoked to intercede for his relief. The mob assembled, and went in pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Rosalia, on Mount Pelegrino; but notwithstanding all this, the Prince died, when a commotion immediately took place, the mob breaking open the prisons, and forming a complete insurrection.

On this, the Marquis Foliani, the Viceroy, was forced to fly for safety: his property, and that of his adherents, was all destroyed, and a new republic was completely established, in which all the high offices were given to barbers, shoemakers, &c. But, at length, the respectable part of the inhabitants, or rather of the commonalty, finding that all property would soon be insecure, seized the ringleaders, who were instantly hanged, and many

others taken off in secret. Order was thus in some degree restored; but it was many months before the government recovered its full extent of power, or was able securely to reassume its functions.

The Sicilian ladies of high rank are not universally handsome; but there are many of them very fascinating and amiable in their manners. Most of them can speak French; some English; and they are fond of our society. Many of them dance extremely well. Our country-dances have become fashionable: but they have many national ones. Waltzes, and a dance called the Tarantela, are the most common. They also occasionally dance Greek dances. Princess Paterno waltzed particularly well; and Madame Minutelo, by birth a Peruvian, a beautiful little woman, equally excelled in the Tarantela. There is now none of that formality spoken of by early tourists; one of whom mentions an anecdote, at an assembly at the Viceroy's Palace, of two girls under eight years of age, heiresses of opulent families, and already betrothed, who were permitted to make their appearance in the ball-room, decked out in the very excess of the then preposterous fashions.

He describes their glittering dresses, diminutive size, and affected gravity in dancing their minuet, joined to the fatherly care which their future husbands anxiously

took of them, as reminding him of dolls that are made to move round a table by clockwork ; and this no doubt must have been ridiculous enough ; but such scenes are no longer exhibited.

Ices, and iced lemonade, are the refreshments taken after dancing: nor did I ever experience the slightest inconvenience from it, though ever so hot: on the contrary, there would be no living without them.

If a man does not allow himself to be prejudiced, and will take a little pains, he may here form many acquaintances, and meet with much hospitality. Amongst those ranks in life at Palermo who do not bear titles, and are therefore thought nothing of, I knew some private families rather intimately, and found among them a great deal of goodness, much friendship and sincerity, and rational conversation ; and as much freedom of intercourse in this class of society with the unmarried women as in England. A man ought, however, to know something of the customs of the country, otherwise he runs a risk of being supposed to intend marriage. In a family where I was very intimate, I was remarking to the mother what a charming girl one of her daughters was. She answered me by saying, “ Siete padrona, Signor :” and to my great astonishment the next day a common friend was commissioned to ask my intentions.

Nevertheless, any Englishman who goes to Palermo, and does not get acquainted in the middling class of society, will lose a very great pleasure. I met with many amiable, lovely women amongst them; and the recollection of having possessed their friendship will ever afford me the greatest satisfaction.

Whatever ideas my countrymen may form of Italian manners; or however much they may suppose that the duties of the married state are unattended to; or whatever opinion they may conceive as to the laxity of morals; they will find on their arrival in Sicily how erroneously they have judged, and how little the reports of individuals, who visit a country without ever forming any acquaintance, or intimacy with its inhabitants, can be depended on.

In Sicily, all formality, all ceremony but civility, are banished in polite society, and married women are allowed a great degree of freedom; but an Englishman must be a long time at Palermo, he must be gentlemanly in his manners, correct in his conduct, and possess the means of rendering himself an agreeable companion, before he will be admitted with freedom or intimacy into the houses of the inhabitants. He may in common with other foreigners be received at the tables

of ministers, may go to Court and know every person; but unless he is amiable, or what is the same thing, rich or agreeable, this acquaintance will extend no farther than a conversation in a ball-room, or on the Marino: nor will their doors ever be opened to admit him into the interior of their family circles.

That the greatest crimes are committed with impunity, and that the morals of the people in all classes are not attended to, is evident to every person who has been resident in the country: but whoever should infer from this that a laxity of morals extends to all persons in all ranks of society, would form a very wrong idea of the present state of Sicily. I could mention many instances of the greatest domestic happiness; but I will content myself with giving one example in a nobleman well known to many of my countrymen, the Marquis of Spacasorno, eldest son of the Prince of Cassaro, and his wife and family; than whom no persons can be happier or more attached, or set a better example in their own persons of every moral virtue.

We are apt to believe in our own country that levity of manners bespeaks levity of mind: but this not always the case abroad. Great latitude of conversation is allowed; and I have conversed with the most modest women on subjects which my own countrywomen would

think it an insult to allude to. Yet this means nothing : they would be astonished if you in the slightest degree presumed upon it.

A person going to Palermo, expecting to find every woman ready to like him, will be most egregiously mistaken. It is probable he may reside there more than a year, and never during that period meet with a woman of rank who will express the slightest regard for him. A Sicilian lady, like all others, requires great attention, undivided regard, and delicacy of sentiment (I speak of the amiable part of the sex) : and of these I may say that no women in the world are more capable of generous and sincere attachments, when they meet with men capable of estimating their value.

If we wish to discover the reason why conjugal infidelity is so common amongst the higher ranks, it must be traced to the bad education of the men, and the early age at which the women are married ; frequently only fourteen, sometimes sooner. Seldom or ever is there any partiality or attachment before marriage ; nor indeed is it possible for a girl at that age, generally speaking, to know what is necessary to her happiness, or what renders a man estimable and good. When a woman at this age, innocent and good herself, uncontaminated by intercourse with the world, and unacquainted with its vices, finds

herself married to a man whose habits are dissipated, who is void of delicacy and affection, and who views his wife as a woman formed merely to contribute to his pleasures, is it to be wondered at, if she becomes either contaminated by his example or corrupted by his influence; or if, notwithstanding, she should be fortunate enough still to retain her own purity of mind, is it not likely she will become disgusted at the conduct of her husband, and contrast it with that of others?

I am convinced, from every observation I have made, and from my experience in life, that in most cases the faults of women originate in ourselves; and if we would but take half the pains to inspire them with virtuous principles that we do to effect the contrary, women would be what nature intended them to be—the solace and comfort of man's existence.

In England one great fault is bringing young women too soon into public notice, and making them know a great deal too much of the world: and this is increased by the general system of novel reading; for though when well written these are a most agreeable recreation, yet few of them are fitted for young inexperienced minds, and should be put into their hands only after the closest inspection.

In Sicily this is exactly reversed: they know nothing of the world, and think every person as amiable as themselves. What can a girl know at fifteen, who has been educated in a convent, and whose reading has been restricted solely to religious publications, to enable her to form a correct judgment of the world she is going to live in? The more innocent, the more amiable they are when they leave those sacred walls, the less able they will be to avoid those errors which the world will endeavour to lead them into. They are taken from school to be married, thus exchanging the restrictions of a convent for the unbounded liberty that is allowed a married woman in their country.

Now, if instead of this they would so far follow our example, as to allow their daughters, after their education is finished, to see something of the world previous to their forming matrimonial engagements, on which the happiness of their future lives depends, and if in forming these engagements they would allow them to have a choice of their own, I am convinced it would be attended with the happiest consequences; and is now all that is wanted to render them every thing that is amiable.

CHAPTER VIII.

FESTIVAL OF SANTA ROSALIA.—ACCOUNT OF THAT SAINT.
—DESCRIPTION OF THE FESTIVAL IN HONOUR OF HER.—
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCHES AT PALERMO.—RE-
FLECTIONS ON THE MODE OF WORSHIP.—CONVENTS.—
MONREALE.

As I was at Palermo during the celebrated festival of San Rosalia, some account of it will probably be expected: I will attempt therefore a short description of it; but as my notes on this subject only comprise the story of the Saint, I trust I shall be excused, should there be any principal circumstance omitted.

The legend relative to her is as follows.---She was related to one of their kings, (the daughter of William the Good, as it is said) and in the year 1159, at the age of fifteen, suddenly disappeared, retiring, as was afterwards discovered, to Monte Pelegrino, in order to spend the remainder of her life in religious solitude; and a period of nearly five hundred years elapsed without her ever being heard of. In the year 1624, there was a horrible plague at Palermo, which threatened to depopulate that capital. A hermit, the story does not say who he was, dreamt

one night that the Saint's bones were on the top of Monte Pelegrino, and that if they were taken up, and carried round the walls of the city in procession, the plague would cease. He related this dream, but to no purpose; it was not attended to. He still, however, continued to dream the same thing; and at last a procession did go to the top of the mountain, where she was found in a cave; some say only the bones, others that the body was fresh, and looked the same as if she was only fifteen, and five hundred years had not elapsed since her disappearance: whichever is the fact, certain it is, that she was carried in solemn procession round the city walls, and the plague did, sometime after, cease. Of course, after such a miracle, churches were built to her honour, and she was worshipped as a Saint, and a chapel was erected on the top of the mountain, on the spot where she was found, and priests appointed to pray there.

To facilitate the approach to those sacred relics, the pious and grateful Palermitans with extraordinary labour constructed a road up the face of the mountain, which is nearly perpendicular, and consists of a very hard calcareous rock. The ascent, however, is still difficult, as the steps are bare of soil: in some respects, indeed, it may be considered as dangerous, being generally called *La Scalà*, the Ladder: yet this operates not as a check to the devotion of many individuals who seek the protec-

tion and patronage of the Saint in their own private affairs, as well as in those of more general import.

In the vault under the chapel, which had long been the resting-place for her bones, an inscription had been put up, which differed a little from the monkish legend, for it stated her to be the daughter, not of William the Good, but of Count Sinibaldus, living at the period when the irruptions of the Saracens were so frequent in Sicily, when she retired first to a cave on Mount Quisquina, in order to preserve her virginity from the brutal attacks of those disciples of Mahomet, and afterwards removed to Monte Pelegrino, where she died inviolate.

Her bones are now annually carried about the city, and are kept in a great silver box of very old and curious workmanship; and according to popular belief, she has several times, since her first discovery, saved the Sicilians from the plague.

For a considerable period before the celebration of the festival it is the subject of general conversation, and creates no small degree of interest.

The preparations for the ceremony take a long time to complete. Her triumphal car is made to an immense height. It is built on the Marino, where a

large space is railed off to prevent persons seeing it until finished. Various fireworks are exhibited at different parts of the town, but the most magnificent were those erected on the Marino, and which covered a large space, the scaffolding for them being as high as the houses.

When every thing is completed, the festival commences, the car being drawn through the principal street by a great number of mules richly caparisoned, preceded by dragoons with trumpets, &c. On the lower part of the machine is an orchestra, whose performers play pieces of music whenever the triumphal car stops, which is very frequently. Above the orchestra there is a small species of temple, in the interior of which are figures of different saints, and on the top of all is a large statue of San Rosalia.

Every side of the machine is decorated with ornaments, and covered with flowers of all descriptions. During this ceremony, which lasts a considerable time, owing to the slowness with which the cavalcade is obliged to move, the street is crowded with people, and the windows, to all of which there are balconies, are filled with ladies. At night there is a general illumination, than which few things can be more beautiful. The people of Palermo do not illuminate in the same manner as in England, but by arches running in a straight line on

each side of the principal streets from the top to the bottom of them.

It is the fashion to drive out on these occasions ; in consequence the streets and Marino are full of carriages ; and as the company are obliged to go very slow, they have every opportunity of seeing and being seen.

The amusements vary each day. One night the Flora Gardens are illuminated ; on another, all the streets ; and in the day-time there are horse-races. These are deserving of notice, as being of a peculiar kind. The horses start from the bottom of the principal street, close by the Porto Felice, and run up to the Porto Nuovo : the distance is a mile, and the street is covered with sand for the occasion. The horses have no riders, but small bladders fixed on the back, in which are inserted sharp points or spikes, which, by the motion of the animal, urge him on. They all start at once ; and what is not a little extraordinary, the people, with which the street is crowded, never attempt to fall back, or make an opening for them to pass, till they are almost touched by them ; and yet accidents, though they sometimes happen, are not common. Government once proposed to prevent this, by placing cords on each side of the street, so as to confine the people within certain bounds ; but they broke down this barrier, and consi-

dered it such an infringement of their favourite amusement, that it has not again been attempted.

The prizes they run for are very small, generally consisting of from ten to fifteen ounces in dollars fastened to boards; and the horse that wins is led in procession with the prize before him. At the celebration when I was present the Prince Paterno, who possessed an old English racer, started him, and he always won easy.

The illumination of the Gardens was particularly beautiful; but I was much surprised to find scarcely a person there, all preferring parading up and down the streets. The fireworks were upon a larger scale, and of a different kind, to any I have ever seen elsewhere. Those on the Marino continued nearly half an hour, and were certainly beautiful; but I confess I am unable to describe what they were meant to represent. There were fireworks in several other places, particularly opposite to the Palace, but I think those on the Marino were the best.

What struck me as most worthy of admiration, during the continuance of this festival, was the illumination of the Madre Chiesa, which is the cathedral-church of Palermo, situated on the right side of the Cassero, in going to the Porto Nuovo. It is a most magnificent

building, and a stranger will find it deserving of many visits. The columns of this church are of the finest oriental marble. There are various chapels dedicated to different saints, the marble and workmanship of which are most beautiful. It is here that the box containing the bones of St. Rosalia is deposited, they having been removed from their former shrine on Monte Pelegrino. It is considered by the lower classes as a certain remedy for all evils to touch this box; and when it is carried in procession the last day, immense crowds may be seen endeavouring to get near it. To return to the illumination: The whole dome of the church, which is very large and of beautiful architecture, is covered with innumerable wax tapers, so as to form one blaze of light. A person who has not seen this, or one of a similar description, can have no idea of the effect produced. All the lower parts of the church also, and every chapel, are superbly illuminated: the pillars are covered from top to bottom, so as to resemble columns of fire: and however anxious I may be to give an idea of it to the mind of my reader, I find it impossible; I can only recommend him to take the first opportunity of seeing it. No expence, no pains are spared to render it most striking: and I have been told by persons who have seen various things of the same kind, that there is nothing that can be compared to it.

The last ceremony is a grand procession, in which the silver box containing the remains of St. Rosalia is carried by the principal citizens, who consider it as the greatest honour. This ceremony is accompanied by several machines representing temples, &c. in the interior of which are placed saints of every description, dressed in the most superb manner.

Thus ends this grand festival. The expence is defrayed by government, and costs, I understand, about eight thousand ounces. The approach of it produces general joy and happiness: and the people are so attached to the memory of this saint, that it is supposed any attempt to suppress the commemoration would actually be attended with the most serious consequences. It is a strong proof of superstition; but it is the business of the Roman Catholic religion to encourage this in the lower classes, and will therefore, most probably, remain always the same. The priests are the only people who know better: they can gain information; and it is for their interest not to give it to the populace.

The churches in Palermo are so numerous, that to describe all would require a volume. The greatest number of them are superbly decorated with silver ornaments, enriched with precious gems, and in many parts coated with the finest marbles. Some of the most ancient ones

are in the Saracenic style of architecture, and some in the florid Gothic, loaded with all the extravagancies of monkish decoration; and however rich they appear in the inside, it must be confessed that some of them are but in barbarous magnificence.

Such has been the profusion of more modern ornaments, that the ancient style of architecture in the interior is completely hidden; the walls being literally lined with yellow and red marbles, on which are fixed large figures in basso-relievo, of angels, saints, beasts, and flowers, generally executed in bright red marble, which colour harmonizes but indifferently with the other parts; indeed, in many places presents a very harsh contrast, the very reverse of elegance, and which has not unaptly been compared to the effect of cut paper on a painted board.

The Chiesa di Pallazzo is very curious and ancient: it is wholly encrusted with Mosaic-work.

The church belonging to the Jesuits is most superb, and requires several days inspection to see all its beauties. It is encrusted all over with the most precious materials; and there is not a part of it that does not deserve admiration. This latter church, whilst in the possession of the Order, was one of the most perfect in Palermo.

It still possesses many beauties ; particularly a cupola, the inside of which has been painted by native masters, selected for their talent in that elegant art. In this, however, the colouring is most to be admired ; for even those who pretend not to connoisseurship, must observe that the perspective in many points is quite erroneous, whilst the attitudes of the figures have a degree of stiffness which seems like affectation.

Some other paintings have been considered as of great merit, but they are not now in good preservation ; some in particular, where there is so much light and so little shade that the effect is almost destroyed ; and though they are in general without what connoisseurs designate as expressive, yet there is a softness in the outline and design, which only leaves room to regret that the painter, Zioppo da Gingi, did not possess a little more science in addition to his taste.

But the most worthy of notice to the antiquary is the Cathedral ; a complete specimen of the Gothic style, having been founded and mostly built in 1185, by the Archbishop Walter.

It is however considered, in its most ancient parts, as more remarkable for the antiquity than the elegance of its Gothic architecture, which so early as the twelfth

century was far from possessing that richness of decoration, that light elegance of outline, as well as ornamental delicacy, for which those buildings of a later period, particularly in England, have been and are so highly distinguished.

The whole of the interior as already noticed is richly ornamented, and the attention is particularly caught by an arch in the shape of an horseshoe, at one end of the choir, covered with arabesque ornaments and statues, from the chisel of Gagini, who is esteemed the most exquisite of the sculptors of the Sicilian school: yet the effect of this extreme elegance is rather hurt than assisted by the singularity of the surrounding ornaments.

The attention of the stranger is particularly directed to the tombs of the ancient sovereigns of Sicily, under the eastern arch of the choir. Of these, four are of the finest porphyry, of a rich and brilliant red; and three of these are cut out of one block of marble, evidently in the antique Roman style, being compared to the tomb of Agrippa, long the admiration of all scientific tourists to the capital of Italy, once of the world, where it was first discovered in the Pantheon.

Whoever visits these sepulchral memorials must at the first glance be convinced of their extreme elegance, and

struck with the rich beauty of their materials : but much difference of opinion has arisen respecting their being real antiques, or only copies. It has been urged that as the ashes of Agrippa were sacrilegiously scattered by the Pope Corsini, in order to make room for his own, so these Sicilian monarchs of the Norman race may have usurped in death the place of repose of former heroes : but it is, perhaps, a more plausible conjecture that the frequent intercourse between the Holy Land and Sicily, in the time of the Crusades, may have given those later princes frequent opportunities of procuring these immense masses of porphyry from Egypt and the East ; and that the same barbarous sculptors of their day may have imitated the Roman model : and this is the more strengthened by the general opinion that the bad taste of some of the ornamental parts bespeaks them not to be of the workmanship of classic times.

Without, however, pursuing this discussion any farther, as my object is to picture what Sicily is, not what it was, I shall only add that these tombs are each covered with an ornamented canopy of the same materials, supported by pillars of a fanciful proportion and form ; and on each of these are exhibited the name and heraldic bearings of their present occupants.

The first Norman Conqueror of Sicily, the gallant and

heroic Earl Roger, whose name struck terror into the hearts of the Saracens, and other enemies of the Christian faith, is buried at the foot of the altar, near which is a tabernacle of lapis lazuli, supposed to be one of the finest collections in existence of that rich material.

Though not professing any skill in architecture, I cannot omit noticing the curious effect of the pillars already mentioned, when stripped of the ornaments used at the festival of San Rosalia, as each consists of four short columns, placed so as to support an arch of gigantic extent, over which there is a lofty superstructure that has undergone some great alterations of late years, during a repair. This was executed so as still to preserve the original pillars, which are of granite, and considered of very high value.

There are also great numbers of convents, which are worthy notice, either for their architecture or paintings. There is a most extraordinary method of burying at the Convent of the Capuchins. The whole of the ground underneath it is subterraneous, and divided into numerous galleries, in which are niches for the bodies, where they stand upright; and the earth, it is said, has some peculiar property of preserving them. This vault, thus prepared as a receptacle for the departed, is formed, properly speaking, of four galleries, all of a considerable breadth, and not less than forty feet long. These are

illuminated in some measure by the light of day, which enters through windows at the end of each gallery, the niches in which the bodies are placed being at the sides.

Most of these melancholy memorials are set upright: their heads, arms, and feet, are without clothing, but their bodies are covered with garments of coarse woollen cloth.

Previous to their being arranged in this order, and to prepare them for preservation by means of the natural qualities of the vault itself, they undergo a tedious process, being broiled, as it is said, for the space of six or seven months over a slow heat, so that all the fat and humours of the bodies are gradually consumed or evaporated, without entirely destroying the form of the corpse, or even the texture of the skin, which resembles common leather of a light pale colour, being in an entire state; nay, though the body itself is often contorted in various contracted shapes, yet the countenances in many instances preserve in some degree their original character, and, it is said, even their expression. They are then placed here, when they become quite dried up. A visit to this place is a kind of *memento mori* that cannot fail of producing some effect, and inducing us to reflect on the folly of our vanities, and of our present pursuits, which are at last to end in such a manner.

The church at Monreale was equal in magnificence to any in Sicily ; I say was, as I have lately been informed it has been burnt down since my return to England : it is the seat of an archbishopric.

Monreale is about three miles from Palermo, and is situated on the side of an immense mountain : it is one of the most beautiful rides round the capital. On each side of the road are several very fine buildings. The Prince Trabiea has a very fine estate on the right of the road, with an excellent house upon it, the whole after the English fashion. To reach Monreale, the tourist must ascend a very high hill, from which he has, without exception, the most beautiful view I ever saw. It comprises the whole of Palermo, and the territories on each side of it, called the Bagaria and Il Colle, with the sea forming the back ground. This view cannot, I think, easily be exceeded in beauty and diversity of scenery. On the left is a precipice : on the right an enormous mountain, wholly incapable of cultivation, composed of rock thrown on rock. Below is the capital, surrounded by the most luxuriant productions of art and nature, with the sea at a distance covered with vessels, thus presenting to the eye at one view the most wild and the most cultivated scenery.

In short, the whole of this excursion is a line of

beauties, for an avenue of majestic trees leads from the very gates of Palermo across the fertile plain, until the traveller begins to ascend the hills by a road extremely convenient and well made: it may indeed even be called magnificent, and for it the Sicilians are indebted to the munificent liberality of Archbishop Testa.

Though its ascent is winding and facile, yet being on the acclivity of the hills, it has been found necessary to support it in many places by breast-works, and even by buttresses of considerable strength. Security, however, has not been the only object, for ornament has also been attended to, there being urns and fountains, with inscriptions in many places, elegantly embosomed in clumps of flowering shrubs.

The sombre appearance of the immense masses of rock on the right is much enlivened by a delightful rivulet, which gushes from its bosom in a rapid and copious stream; an effect evidently much heightened by art, as some very large fragments of rock, which confine the water at its first discharge until it is in sufficient quantity to dash over these rugged masses of dark stone, have every appearance of having been placed here by human taste and ingenuity.

After dashing from rock to rock, and almost stunning

the ear by its noise, it falls into a bason of considerable extent, fringed all round with the beautiful flowers and broad green leaves of the water lily, and some flags, amongst which are said to be many specimens of the Lotus, or Egyptian Flag. After traversing this delightful route, the tourist, at length, arrives at the gate of Monreale, which terminates this interesting approach; where, however, the ideas raised by his expecting fancy are not absolutely realized into certainty.

Indeed, in regard to this town, or archiepiscopal city, I cannot speak highly in favour either of its entrance, or of its streets, as it is built on a very ancient plan, having been first founded by William the Second in 1174, in consequence of a Benedictine convent of great reputed sanctity existing then on the spot.

It stands on the very summit of a hill, and is completely surrounded by mountains of the loftiest altitude, except on its northern face.

Here indeed the tourist thinks not of the uncouth and sometimes squalid misery by which he is environed, but feels his whole attention occupied by the enchanting prospect before him, directing his almost boundless view over romantic and extensive hanging woods of olive and orange trees, which cover the dells and small plains,

may, the rocks in many places, until he fixes them on Palermo, and the ocean, whilst his whole soul is wrapped up in admiration of the noble and heart-expanding scenery.

The town itself is small, and possesses few good buildings; but the very ancient cathedral repaid me for the disappointment. It was then full of monuments of the most beautiful materials, in which reposed the ashes of many of their kings; and the whole church was covered with the most costly Mosaic. One could not view it without thinking of the labour and expence it must have cost. This church was held in high regard and estimation by the Sicilians, and was much resorted to, and if it is burnt down so as to be quite destroyed, will be not a little regretted by them, and, indeed, by tourists in general, as being a curious specimen of the Gothic style of architecture.

One of the tombs already mentioned was that of William the Bad, whose son and successor, lying at his feet, deserved a better name, and was designated as William the Good, father of the popular Saint of Palermo, St. Rosalia.

A monument of porphyry, of the same kind, and of the same workmanship as those in the Cathedral of Pa-

lermo, contains the remains of the former sovereign; and here also was a coffin, said to enclose the bowels of that romantic but unfortunate French monarch, Lewis the IX. who, in his attack upon the Saracens in Tunis, in the year 1270, died in his camp of the plague, but whose memory was so much revered by the church, that scarcely thirty years afterwards he was canonized, and became a Saint of the Romish ritual.

This conflagration must also have destroyed a picture extremely famous, not only for its execution, but also for its sanctity. This was a representation of the martyrdom of St. Placidus; a piece remarkably well sketched, and possessing a strong and natural tone of colouring, yet censured as inaccurate in its design, though still considered as a chef d'œuvre of Monrealesi, who has been designated as the Raphael of Sicily.

To return to Palermo, I must observe that there are numerous other religious edifices equally worthy of notice: many of them possess very fine paintings, and the architecture of almost all is beautiful: some are very ancient, and have inscriptions in different parts of them which would interest an antiquarian. I do not indeed know any thing that affords more pleasure than entering a church at Palermo: on the hottest day they are delightfully cool; and as it is the custom in all Catholic countries

to have the churches open at day-light, and not shut till dark ; by these means they are always perfectly well aired, and they are likewise kept very clean.

A contemplative mind on entering one of their large churches, where silence is only interrupted by a few priests walking up and down, or a sob at intervals from some distant confessional, is inevitably led to the most serious reflections.

Our public places of worship are, in general, so damp, so dark, so dismal, and so gloomy, as to deter many people from going to church : this is often the reason why so many dissent from the established religion, and, indeed, this gloominess, and the little attention paid to the interior of our religious edifices, have the worst effect on the mind. In Sicily, and in all countries where the Catholic religion is established, every part of the church inspires pleasing as well as solemn ideas : let the stranger turn his eye which way he will ; let him enter at what hour he pleases, whether at the time of public prayer or not, no person takes any notice of him ; he may retire into any corner, and pray undisturbed, and may stay as short or as long a time as he thinks proper. As far as this goes, no fault can be found. I have given the pleasing side of their religion ; I have therefore the liberty of censuring it.

The population of Palermo does not exceed two hundred thousand souls ; for these there are more than three hundred churches, convents, and chapels, a number infinitely greater than is necessary. The priests exceed fifteen thousand, one half of whom have no means of living but what they derive from the charity and superstition of their penitents. What a large proportion of the wealth and produce of the country must go through the hands of these men, to enable them to live in a state of useless and continued idleness ! Indeed, it was the opinion of many whom I conversed with, who were in their ideas rigidly Catholic, that one-fourth part of the number of priests now in Palermo would be more than sufficient to fulfil every duty connected with their mode of worship.

Although highly attached to my own religion, yet as a traveller I could not help admiring some of the Catholic ceremonies, particularly that of the elevation of the Host ; and, however much men may differ in speculative opinions, I am convinced no person, really religious, could see high and low, rich and poor, forgetting all distinction, kneeling on the ground, even in the streets, with uncovered heads, adoring the great Author of our existence, without feeling an inclination, however strongly he might think it right to repress it, to kneel and pray with them

also. I am inclined to think that I am not singular in this sentiment; it is ever the proof of a well-regulated mind to pay respect to established customs, particularly in matters of religion; and nothing can be more contrary to reason, than for a stranger in a foreign country to reprobate and find fault with every custom, merely because it is contrary to his own.

CHAPTER IX.

CONVENT OF SAN MARTINO.—DESCRIPTION OF IT.—REFLECTIONS, POLITICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE.—THE CARNIVAL.—ACCOUNT OF THE AMUSEMENTS.—REMARKS ON THE POLITICAL CHANGES THAT HAVE LATELY TAKEN PLACE.—ENVIRONS OF PALERMO.—LA BAGARIA.—IL COLLE.—MONTE PELEGRINO.—GREEK COLONY.—REMARKS ON THE POLICE.

ABOUT seven miles from Palermo is situated the Convent of San Martino, an immense and magnificent building, placed on a lofty eminence with a northern aspect : but it struck me as being infinitely too superb a residence for men who profess to have given up the world ; fit for a monarch, but not for an Anchorite.

The situation is perfectly solitary, no houses near, being surrounded on every side by very high mountains, the extreme elegance of the edifice forming a wonderful contrast with the wildness of the scenery, where there is little or no cultivation, and scarcely a tree to be seen.

No woman is ever permitted to enter its walls ; but I believe the Queen is an exception to this regulation.

Every inhabitant of it must be a nobleman, or, more properly speaking, the sons of noblemen, who at its first foundation were the only persons admitted either into the brotherhood, or even permitted to take up a residence here. Its young inmates were sent here for the purpose of education, and by the rules of the order, their term was to extend to the period of seven years, at the end of which they were obliged either to embrace a monastic life, or still to dedicate themselves to religion by assuming the cross, and becoming Knights of Malta, when the vows of celibacy, chastity, and mortification, were equally taken, and about as much attended to. Formerly the Convent was very rich, but its revenues are now much decreased, being barely able to support the expence of the establishment. It was a long time before we could get admittance, and we were at last obliged to go round to the back entrance. Here we were received by priests, who are appointed for this purpose; and our horses put into the stables. To describe the building and all its beauties with precision would require a greater memory than I possess: I regret I did not take notes on the spot, as it contained much that was worthy of recollection.

On first entering the magnificent hall we were much struck with its elegance, being a noble and lofty room, its roof resting on superb pillars of Sicilian marble.

On our right hand was a noble staircase of the same rich materials, forming a double ascent of magnificent elevation. Its walls are elegantly ornamented with fresco paintings, and it leads to the apartments of the Prior.

The superior of the convent received us with much civility : he was a very well informed man, by no means a bigot ; at least, he did not appear so from his conversation. His apartments consisted of two rooms ; and though the weather was beginning to be cold, there was no fire. In the room where he sat was a small sofa ; in other respects the furniture was very plain, nothing more than was absolutely necessary. The walls were bare ; with a few pictures and some books. He understood and had studied our language. His favourite author was Milton.

Immense galleries, leading to the various apartments, go all round the building, and run in every direction to a great extent : it would require a long time to be acquainted with all their intricacies. The most beautiful paintings hang on each side of these walls, and at the end of one of them the stranger is struck by the appearance of an elegant fountain embosomed in laurels, and producing a most pleasing impression. The library is a very fine room, ornamented with columns of the Corinthian order formed of highly polished walnut-tree wood, and

filled with rare and valuable works. A month's residence would not be sufficient to inspect all of them. There is a gallery round the room to enable persons to reach the books on the upper shelves. There are some very ancient and scarce editions of the Bible, and it is particularly rich in Latin and Greek manuscripts. They have a Cicero, which they said was written by himself: for the truth of this I will not vouch; but it was beautifully written, and if what they said was true, it was most certainly an invaluable curiosity. Every thing is arranged and kept in the nicest order. From the library we were conducted to see the collection of medals, which are kept in their treasury amongst various other curiosities, formerly lodged in a small apartment called the Museum. This collection is very good, but placed in no order, not even classed. It contains, among other things, numerous specimens of Saracenic armour, some relics of Grecian earthenware, a few Gothic pictures, and a variety of Sicilian coins of considerable antiquity.

In one part of this convent the young nobility are still educated, and at a certain age they either enter the convent or the world, the original rules being now in some measure relaxed. When we returned from visiting this part of the building, we were taken up the great staircase, than which nothing can be more beautiful. It is made, as I have before observed, of the most superb

marble; for about twenty steps, the ascent is a straight line, when it branches off to the right and left. Each step is formed of one piece of marble, and is a great width. Arrived at the top, we proceeded to the rooms more immediately appropriated to the paintings. All the galleries on this side are full of them, and they are almost all originals by the first masters. I am only sorry that my recollection does not enable me to give a description of them; but there are few collections that contain finer, particularly one in the Refectory, said to be an original of the famous Paul Veronese. With great propriety, this order seems to have attended to the collection and preservation of the specimens of their own native masters, particularly a few by Zioppo di Gangi, a painter, whose works are not much known among connoisseurs, and also a few very elegant productions of the pencil of Morrealese, called by some the "Sicilian Raphael." Here also is a very extensive and tasteful assemblage of ancient vases.

Last of all we visited the church. It is extremely beautiful, but has never been entirely finished: it was meant to have been wholly encrusted with the most precious marbles. One chapel on the left of the organ is finished in this manner; but I suppose the immense expence, and a difficulty in obtaining a sufficient quantity of materials, are the causes of its being left undone. This

church possesses one of the finest organs in Europe: except in Catania, there is none in Sicily that can be compared to it. It has every possible stop, and only requires one person to play on it; who can either play so as to resemble a full band, one instrument, or as many as he may think proper.

The expensive style of this immense edifice may be estimated from the fact, that upwards of twenty years ago the rebuilding had actually cost one hundred and fifty-nine thousand crowns.

Having now seen all that was worthy our notice, we returned to the apartments of the Superior, where we found refreshments, and some very good wine. After some little time passed in conversation on various subjects we took our leave, and returned much gratified to Palermo. It was fully my intention to have obtained permission to reside at the convent for some days; but a variety of unforeseen events prevented my doing so. This will always be a matter of regret to me, should I never have an opportunity of again visiting it. There is nothing particularly striking in the ride from this place to Palermo: at the same time, it offers many fine points of view, and the road is tolerably good.

At the time I saw this convent there was little or no probability of any interference on the part of our government with the Sicilian; and it was the opinion of every Englishman at that time that our situation in the country was by no means secure; and I believe many of the English merchants were seriously alarmed. With these impressions, in common with others, I could not help thinking with regret of the moment when we might be driven out of Sicily, and the French in possession of it; being well aware that the first thing they would have done would have been to have stripped the magnificent Convent of San Martino of every fine painting, and all its valuable library, and sent the spoils to Paris. Now, I am happy to say, this is not likely to take place. It is, however, not a little extraordinary that the Sicilians are not much acquainted with this convent; few ever visit it, except to see a friend; and it is the last thing that is mentioned to a stranger. Many of the inhabitants had never even seen it; so that every thing it contains is useless, except to the few individuals who inhabit its walls. This want of curiosity in a Sicilian gentleman is, I think, one of their great failings. The greatest part of them never go five miles from the capital, unless absolutely obliged to visit their estates, and these are most commonly left wholly to stewards.

There is now, however, some hope that affairs, private

as well as public, will go on better than they have done, and that some attention will be paid to the alleviation of the miseries of the lower orders. The hereditary Prince, in his speech to Parliament some time back, strongly advises a reform in government, and recommends the English constitution for their model. Every man whose heart is sufficiently capacious to rejoice at the happiness of others, will feel glad to know that there is thus a probability of one of the finest countries in the world enjoying some of the advantages of freedom.

During my residence at Palermo the Carnival took place, and though in some respects disappointed, yet still I derived considerable amusement from it. The pleasures of the lower classes of people during the time it lasts consist chiefly in masking, and thus parading the streets, doing nothing, and in a degree of liberty which they do not possess at other periods. The pits of the theatres are open to them gratis; all the seats are taken out, and where the orchestra generally is, are steps to the stage, on which are placed guards to prevent any person going on it, till the ballet, which is in general given by the nobility, is finished.

This is performed at the Theatre San Carolina; and the first that was given was a pantomime. The Royal Family were all present. The Prince Catolico was in the

character of a shew-man, with a large collection of wild beasts. He was carried in a sedan chair, covered with superb gilding; on the top of which sat the Count San Martino in the character of a wild man: the latter was inimitably well-dressed. Very large dogs were covered with skins, or painted so as to represent different wild beasts; and the ballet was performed by young noblemen, dressed in the most superb manner. The Sicilians possess very great taste in their mode of dressing. At the conclusion of the dance, a bird with some complimentary verses in his mouth, was so fastened to a wire as to be drawn up to the King's box; which ended the amusement. The other pantomime was performed at the same theatre; annexed is a description of it as printed at Palermo..

ERCOLE AGLI ORTI ESPERIDI.

BALLO PANTOMIMA.

La decoracione figurerà una parte degli Orti Esperidi sparsa di Alberi di Pomo d'oro, I di cui rami intrecciati formino un Tempietto, che ricuopra il Simulacro di Giove Tonante, dietro del quale sono sparsi gli emblemi dell'Astronomia..

Egle, Aretusa, ed Iperitusa, le tre Ninfe Esperidi figlie di Atlante Rè di quella parte dell' Africa, che fu poi detta Mauritania, destinate da Giovi alla custodia delle auree frutta ad Esso date in dono da Gunome, adernpiscono le matutinè ordinarie libazioni al Rè di Numi.

Sopraggiunge Atlante, invoca anch' Egli il Dio dell' Universo, ed insieme alle Figlie si dà alla più semplice, é pura gioga che viene disturbata da un insolito rumore, che si sente all' entrata del Bosco, Corrono sbigottite le Donzelle ad indigarne la causa, e ritornano annunciando l'arrivo d'un messo del Rè Busiride d'Egitto, il quale chiede parlargli, Atlante s'avvia egli medesima permettergli l'ingresso, cercano dissuadernelo le Figlie presaghe di un prossim disastro, ma Egli riassicurandole, introduce il Messo; il quale accompagnato da diversi Satelliti, dichiara alle belle Niufe la fiamma del Rè per Esse, derivante dalla riputazione di lore saggezza, e beltà, e l'ordine di doverle condurre alla di lui Reggia, abbandonata la religiosa custodia, Inorrdiscono, è le Ninfe, ed Atlante, ma vane le preghiere, e non intese le ragioni, le Ninfe sono strappate a forza, ed allontanate dal seno dell'inerte Genitore, allora quando sopraggiunge Ercole quivi spedito dal Germano Euristeo, onde compiere la sua duodecima impresa, quale si è quella di uccidere il Drago di Minerva Custode de Pomi, è presentar questi

allo stesso Euristeo, perchè gli venga ceduta in fine la Corona di Micene che al prezzo di tanti travagli deve acquistare.

Alla vista di Ercole, che porta la Spoglia del Drago già ucciso, si arrestano tutti; Atlante gli narra l'escrando misfatto, che v'è a commettersi, e l'Eroe, dopo breve pugna, debella i satelliti, è libera le Ninfe.

Grato, e riconoscente Atlante, Gli accorda il possesso di Pomi; Ercole le obbliga i Satelliti di Busiride divenuti suoi prigionieri a caricarsene, perdonando loro, a condizione che lo siegnano presso Euristeo gravati del prezioso, e sacro Trofeo.

S'intreccia una Danza generale, dopo la quale da fine all'azione il di stacco dalle Esperidi, e da Atlante, che fa Ercole, il quale a lui promette di sollevarlo nel faticoso incarco, ad Esso affidato, di sostenere il Mondo sul suo dorso.

N O T A.

A rendere più vaga più interessante la scena, a quanto dice la Mitologia, si è ruinito quello, che opina di tal racconto lo Istorico Diodoro.

The Princess Paterno, the Duchess San Giovanni, and Madame Minutelo, personated the three daughters of Attalanta, King of Mauritania. The Prince Catolico took this part, and a Neapolitan officer in the Guards, called Pignatelli, a remarkably well-made man, undertook that of Hercules. This pantomime was extremely well executed. Hercules, to shew his strength, threw all the noblemen who represented the guards of the King Busiris over his shoulders. At the end of the piece all the gentlemen formed a circle, bending down their heads, and closing their arms together, so as to form a complete platform, on which Hercules leaped ; by which he was enabled to reach the Queen's box ; to whom he presented a basket containing the golden apples.

When the pantomime is entirely finished, the stage is opened for the admission of every person who chooses : and a greater scene of noise and confusion can scarcely be conceived. All the people who are in the pit must be masked whilst the Royal Family remain in the house. The boxes are filled by different parties ; in several of which there are suppers.

One other amusement that took place during the Carnival struck me as worthy of observation. It was a sea-fight, but not, as may naturally be supposed, on the water, but on shore. Two large boats beautifully painted

were fixed on carriages drawn by mules, all ornamented in the most superb manner. One boat's crew were dressed exactly in the costume of Algerine corsairs; the other as English sailors. They first paraded through the streets, each party provided with sacks of burnt almonds, sugared over: these were thrown at every person they met, even into the balconies. After having thus paraded about a sufficient time, the battle commenced near the Palace, when of course the English were victorious, and the show ended by the conquerors again driving through the principal streets.

I have now in a cursory, and I am too sensible in a very imperfect manner, described those amusements which are in any way different from those in my own country: they at least possess the charm of novelty to an Englishman; indeed, I think a man must be rather fastidious who does not enjoy them. Whether it is from the difference of climate, or habits, or from any other cause, I will not assert, but there is certainly a degree of cheerfulness and animation in foreign countries, and in none more than Sicily, that we are not accustomed to see in our own island; and it is more particularly observable on these public occasions. Every body seems to wish not merely to look happy, but also to be so. The very beggar enjoys himself for the time. In England, a man is estimated by the strength of his purse; at least it is a

strong letter of recommendation. This in some measure is the case in all countries, but less so than in our's. In Sicily a man may associate in the first society, and yet have a very limited income. It is not easy to do this in England.

A stranger visiting Palermo will find that there are few places where he can pass his time more agreeably. The climate is delightful, although it must be confessed that at times the scirocco is felt here in almost its native violence; for although this wanderer, blowing from the fiery deserts of Africa, is considerably cooled by the extent of sea it has to pass over from the coast of Mauritania, and is not severely relaxing on the southern coast of Sicily, yet it is supposed to acquire additional heat in sweeping over the arid plains in the centre of the island, from whence it arrives at Palermo so as to be at times most oppressive. Even then, however, it is in some degree mitigated by the northerly breeze which generally commences at noon from the sea, and checks the extreme heat produced by the reflection and reverberation of the almost burning torrent amongst the lofty hills in the vicinity.

The country, particularly round Palermo, he will also find beautiful, the inhabitants inclined to be hospitable, and doing all in their power to render a residence in their

country agreeable to him, and all the necessaries of life reasonable and in abundance. He may live as retired or as gay a life as he chooses; no one will interfere with him. In giving this account, however, I must be understood as it was when I was there, not as it now is. At that time there were not more than forty or fifty Englishmen at Palermo: now there is a garrison of several thousands, and a great number of our countrymen who have gone from motives of curiosity or pleasure, many of whom are men of very large fortunes. The consequence of this has been the rendering the place much more expensive, and much less agreeable. Most persons go abroad with a desire of living with the inhabitants of the country where they are going to reside, of becoming acquainted with their habits, customs, manners, &c. In short, they wish to see something different from their own country; but this cannot now be so practicable as it was two years ago. Every public place must be filled with Englishmen; and however much the Sicilians might wish to be civil to a few who were resident in their country, it follows as matter of course that they cannot open their houses to several hundreds. In addition to this, the quantity of money which the English spend wherever they go, makes every thing double its former price, and must have had the effect of making the generality of the Sicilians withdraw themselves from our society. This

will oblige them to live more amongst themselves, and I understand it is in some degree the case at present. House-rent and every part of the expenditure of a family is much increased; still, however, it is cheaper than in England, so that a great number of English families have gone there within the last two years, and still more are going.

Since commencing this chapter it is with the greatest pleasure I have learnt that a change has actually taken place in the government of Sicily: I shall not, however, alter what I have previously said, which was written before this change had happened; it will be seen that my ideas of what was necessary to be done are verified by the event.

Monopoly is abolished; the Barons have agreed to relinquish their feudal rights; the freedom of the people is to be allowed; trial by jury is ordained, and every individual is to have the benefit of justice: in short, this change is evidently founded on the principles of our constitution, and if carried into effect, cannot fail of being attended with every good.

This revolution in affairs has been unattended by any disturbances: some persons say it was done against the

wishes of the court ; I do not think so. I have that opinion of the Queen which induces me to believe she will be the first to rejoice at the welfare of her country ; and what makes me think that it is done with her approbation, is, that the propositions for a change in the government originated with the Hereditary Prince, and he and his mother are strongly attached to each other. In the measures that have been taken, the Prince Butiro, and the Prince Belmonte, seem to have been the leading members. Every Sicilian must rejoice at this prospect of returning freedom ; and no small merit seems to be due to the Barons in having thus voluntarily given up those unlimited powers they have so long possessed, and which I much doubt would not easily have been taken from them had they refused their consent.

Should no unforeseen event occur to prevent the intended change being carried into effect, every thing may be hoped for from it. Formerly the Sicilian parliament met only once in three years ; it is now to meet annually. Formerly there was no appeal against oppression or injustice, but to the very persons who were the instigators or perpetrators of it—and who is there that will condemn their own actions ? The consequence was, that there was no possibility of obtaining justice. This heaviest of all evils is now happily to be done away with, and every

person of the lowest condition will now have it in his power to gain redress against his oppressor, however rich or powerful he may be.

There is, I think, now little doubt that Sicily will become a country of considerable importance, under a free and enlightened government ; and I am confident that its fate must doubly interest every Englishman, when it is considered, that notwithstanding our numerous alliances, notwithstanding we have supported our allies at an enormous expenditure of money, and what is of still greater consequence to us, at the expence of thousands on thousands of our bravest countrymen, yet still from that line of politics which has ever been pursued by this country, that of supporting the government of the country in alliance with us, however bad it might be, and though the people were groaning under the heaviest despotism, Sicily will thus be the first country that has reason to rejoice at our alliance ; for without any further interference, than our services to the Sicilian government gave us a right to, and which the dissatisfied state of the people rendered absolutely necessary, we have been the cause of giving to the Sicilians a constitution, which will eventually make them great, good, and powerful. Great, because freedom will teach them to find out the resources and value of the country they possess : good, because the first step to being so is to have the mind unfettered by the chains of

slavery, which in all countries, and at all periods, have ever been productive of the most flagrant crimes: and powerful, because every country must be so where the inhabitants are actuated by a love of freedom and virtue.

My reader may consider this as an unnecessary digression, but I do not pretend to give a regular work to the public. I had at first intended giving no account of Sicily, except relative to its productions, and as it was of consequence to this country; but upon more mature deliberation, I resolved to add some account of its inhabitants, its manners, customs, &c; and as there are so many persons who have never been in Sicily, nor ever can, I presumed that some remarks on these subjects might not be disagreeable.

To return to Palermo. The country on each side of it is beautiful: the road to the Bagaria runs close along the sea-shore for a considerable distance, between hedges formed of the Indian Fig and Aloe; indeed, the whole surrounding space affords much amusement to the botanist, as even those parts totally uncultivated produce great quantities of the Palma Christi, from whence the castor oil is drawn, of Palmettos, or Dwarf Palms, together with Oleander, Asparagus, and other odoriferous and useful plants in wild profusion.

The soil itself is, however, in many parts extremely rocky, and of a red cast, particularly as the hill rises towards La Bagaria, which is almost literally covered with the palaces of the nobility.

This road proceeds as far as Termini, which is about thirty miles off. Throughout this direction there are several palaces belonging to the higher orders of nobility, but I confess I do not recollect any thing sufficiently striking to enable me to give a description of them, with the exception of one very elegant edifice, not very distant from Palermo, and which has not long been built, perhaps not more than thirty years.

Its founder was of the name of Galette, and a prelate of considerable eminence in the church.

It may almost be said to be loaded with ornaments, yet these are so light and airy, and in such a chaste style, that they appear more elegant than rich and laboured. Its lower story is of the rustic order, with a handsome arched passage or gateway in the centre, and the attention of the stranger is immediately caught by two very handsome vases in the antique fashion, placed in open niches on each side: over this is a pediment, whose outline assimilates well with the balustrades on each side of it, and which seem to spring most natu-

rally from a graceful row of pilasters of the Corinthian order that ornament the upper story.

Palaces in Sicily, as well as all over Italy, are immense piles of buildings; the architecture is generally good, and many, both inside and out, are built of the most costly materials; but when this is said, there is little more to add: the residence of a rich nobleman is nearly the same in all countries; still it may be here mentioned that the villas of La Bagaria suffer much from the weather, as they are built of a coarse porous stone, whose colour is of a dusky yellow, called *Breccia*, I believe, by mineralogists. Preceding tourists have noticed that it may almost be said, without any deviation from truth, that the houses and villas on this hill are formed of shells: the apparent paradox being founded on the fact, that the mountains in which the quarries are worked have every appearance of having been once submarine; the whole of their substance consisting of masses of sea-shells in a state of consolidation, and united with stony concretions, though the latter bear a very small proportion to the whole; and the consequence is that the wind and rain make repeated assaults upon the buildings formed of these materials, destroying much of the beauty and workmanship of the ornamental architecture.

The views in this direction are beautiful, and to those

who can derive pleasure from the beauties of nature, will afford much gratification, as most of the villas are situate on the very summit of the hill, and thus command a superb prospect of both the Bays of Palermo and Termini.

If proof were wanting of the value of Sicily as a productive country, it would be found in this vicinity; and it was at La Bagaria that the sugar-works, recorded by a Sicilian writer, Leandro Abbate, once existed. Circumstances, indeed, particularly the want of capital, and the dearness of labour, have long since caused them to be abandoned.

Some sugar is, however, still made in the island, though I have never seen any of it: it is indeed more properly to be esteemed a rarity than actually a part of the produce, for the quantity of sugar-canes now cultivated in the island is not very great: yet if industry was once encouraged, there can be no doubt that Sicily would soon at least supply its own consumption.

Even now, the few canes I have seen on the eastern coast were of a considerable size; and they are in general full of juice, though scarcely receiving any cultivation, which shews clearly that the climate has sufficient mois-

ture and heat for their nourishment and ripening ; and as the farmer is without fear of West Indian hurricanes to destroy his works, and lay waste his plantations, a more extended cultivation might be undertaken with the most favourable auspices, and unattended by those evils so much deprecated as connected with the African Slave-trade.

Should it therefore be true, as stated, that the abolition of the Slave-trade, notwithstanding the illicit smuggling carried on, has completely put a stop to the forming of additional plantations in the West Indies, the future demand, under an improved and peaceable state of commercial intercourse throughout Europe, will be more than equivalent to the transatlantic supply ; interest, therefore, as well as philanthropy, will doubtless prompt to the encouragement of such a culture in Sicily, which would, of course, be under British protection ; would employ British capital ; and under those circumstances would not interfere with our own colonial interests when the markets become thus extended.

This, however, is a speculation of a date rather distant in prospect, although passing events may be considered as offering a hope that the intermediate circumstances are in a fair train of taking place. But to return to our subject.

The country on the other side of Palermo, called Il Colle, though different from that of La Bagaria, is not less deserving of our admiration, though the tourist does not see the Mediterranean, as it is hid by Monte Pelegrino. On one side of this little tract of country is the above mountain, rising abruptly from the sea, not more than a mile distant from the gates of the capital, and standing isolated from all the surrounding hills. On the other side, but considerably further off, are those mountains which have been already mentioned as forming the back ground of Palermo: it is this road which leads to the Favorita; and there are numerous seats of the nobility in every direction: the road itself leading to the sea at the other extremity of Monte Pelegrino.

This mountain, which I have so often mentioned, lies on the West side of Palermo, consisting of a limestone of a most indurated nature, its masses of rock being quite destitute of all vegetation, with the exception of some small tufts of grass, which spring from the interstices, where their slender roots find nourishment and shelter; but, except on its summit, it affords no place for a single tree, nor even the smallest shrub, presenting thus a scene of rude, yet picturesque desolation. In addition to its present sanctity, from having been the retreat and burying place of the so much revered Palermitan Saint, it is not unknown in ancient history, but is mentioned as early as

the first Punic war, when all Sicily was overrun by the Roman invaders, notwithstanding the abilities and prowess of the Carthaginian generals: yet so strong was Pelegrino, according to the then system of warfare, that the famous Hamilcar Barcas took post here, and added considerable fortifications to its natural strength, so that he was not only enabled to keep up his communication with the sea, and, of course, with his own country, but actually withstood all the efforts of the Romans for a space of five years.

The approach to its summit, as I have before noticed, is even at present very steep and difficult, though it leads to the grotto of the Saint. This road is said to have been made by order of the Senate of Palermo, who, as a means of defraying its expence, imposed a tax on all kinds of butcher's meat, which fully answered their purpose.

The view from the top is uncommonly fine: on a clear day a good eye can discern the Lipari Islands very plainly; Ætna may also be seen from thence. The height of this mountain is so great, that from the top every part of Palermo may be distinguished. Indeed, the prospect from this hill is by some thought preferable to that from Monreale, which I have before described.

The ascent, at an easy pace, requires a full hour to

perform it; but the stranger is not only repaid for his trouble by the enchanting prospect, but also by viewing the cavern or grotto where the body of the Saint was discovered.

No sooner did this important event take place, than religious enthusiasm proceeded to give it every decoration compatible with the situation of the spot, particularly a rich altar, under which was laid a statue of the Saint recumbent at full length, and formed of a beautiful marble, which was of late years covered with a silver vest presented by the present, or rather by the late King of Spain. The desire of ornamenting this retired spot was indeed, in some measure, checked by the nature of the place, as it is extremely wet from the number of springs that exude on all sides, and in such quantities that leaden pipes were fitted to the roof to give a direction to the superfluous moisture. Here is also a convent, close to which is the portico that covers the entrance of the sacred grotto.

A colony of Greeks reside about thirty miles from Palermo, who have retained their dress, habits, and customs, unchanged. They never marry but amongst themselves, at least so I was informed, and it is most probable they do not. The women are in general handsome: their dress is uncommon. The men have, in ge-

neral, tall commanding figures, with thick dark hair: on their heads they wear a small skull-cap, with a silk tassel hanging down; a loose jacket, often ornamented with gold or silver lace; and broad striped trowsers, with a silk sash tied round their waist; and almost always a large rosary complete their costume.

The women wear their hair very long, confined either in a silk bag or a silk handkerchief, tied round the head; with large pendent ear-rings of the purest gold, that have descended to them from their ancestors; and often gold or pearl necklaces, with several rings on their fingers. Their features are perfectly Greek, and they are generally handsome: they wear short petticoats, and long stays laced before: and when full-dressed, have a scarlet coat, made almost like regimentals, richly laced with gold, and gold epaulets; it does not come over the bosom, but hangs off the shoulders. It is a handsome dress, and when the eye is accustomed to it, not unbecoming.

The contemplation of this interesting colony leads one to investigate their origin, which undoubtedly must have taken place at the time when various parties of emigrant wanderers from the shores of Greece arrived upon the coast of this fertile island, and, tempted by the rich luxuriance of the soil, and the mildness of the climate, here formed their infant settlements; at first leading a pure

Arcadian life, until industry and arts had enabled them to produce a superfluity for exportation ; thus giving birth to a commerce which is recorded in ancient history to have increased their wealth, and consequently their population and power, to an extent much beyond that of Sicily at the present day ; and proving that my hopes and prospects of its future welfare are aided by indubitable facts, and confirmed by past experience.

It has been supposed that the ancient and aboriginal inhabitants, the Siculi, fled on those occasions to the mountains ; but if so, there is no trace of them remaining ; it is therefore more probable that in time they became wholly extinct ; or perhaps united themselves, and were thus so amalgamated with their invaders that their national character became lost in consequence of their blood being thus blended with that of the new comers.

Nor was the Grecian genius left by those wanderers upon their native shores ; for throughout the whole of the Greek settlements in Sicily the arts and sciences were cultivated with as much assiduity as in Greece itself, nay, their inventions and improvements were in a great measure as new and as striking as any that country could boast ; these, its worthy descendants, vying with their compatriots in every excellence, treading in the same

paths of freedom, and often surpassing them in bearing away the palm of superiority.

Indeed, many of those who are vulgarly esteemed Greek writers were actually the natives of this happy climate: it is, however, needless to ransack the schools for all their names, those of Theocritus, and of Archimedes, of Charondas, of Gorgias, &c. being fully sufficient for our purpose; and these will also sufficiently shew that the mental as well as natural improvement, or rather restoration of Sicily, is a hope resting on the most plausible foundation, when liberty such as England possesses, and accompanied by security, shall permit the expansion of intellect, and nerve the arm of industry.

The whole appearance of this small colony of people is totally different from that of the other inhabitants of Sicily; and it is very extraordinary how they have been able thus to retain, for above two thousand years, their habits and customs, more particularly when it is considered how many revolutions have taken place in Sicily, and how often, during this period, it has changed its masters: yet these people have not imbibed any foreign customs. I got acquainted with several of the women, purposely to converse with them. Their common language is Greek, whether pure or not I am incompetent to judge; but

most of them speak the Sicilian language : they are not so animated in their manners as the Sicilians, but they are to the full as pleasing. There is something inexpressibly agreeable in the expression of their countenances. In the men there is an appearance of cunning, but marked by sense : the women have large full eyes, straight noses, fine open foreheads, beautiful teeth ; and the face forms a complete oval, with uncommonly fine hair that grows to a great length : such is a Greek woman.

I cannot leave Palermo without saying something on the subject of the Police, and also as to assassinations : that the latter are frequent is certain, but not so much so as is supposed in this country. Several occurred whilst I was at Palermo, but chiefly amongst the lower classes. From whatever cause it arises, a Sicilian is undoubtedly revengeful : when once provoked to a certain degree, he will attempt to kill his opponent with the first thing in his way. I saw several instances of this. One day in particular, I was going to pay a visit. The street was very narrow : I perceived all the houses were shut, and people looking out of the balconies, and I had only time to put my back against a doorway, before two dragoon soldiers passed me without swords, running very fast : they had large stones in their hands, which they threw at another soldier who pursued them with a drawn sword, and who was very near cutting one of them down several

times : luckily for those pursued, they got into a place of shelter at the top of the street. I did not hear the reason of the quarrel ; but the consequences would certainly have been fatal if the pursuer had overtaken the others : what is most remarkable is, that the houses on these occasions are all shut, and every body gets out of the way. In England, was such a circumstance to occur, the passers-by would endeavour to separate the parties, and prevent mischief ; but at Palermo I have repeatedly seen similar occurrences without any one interfering.

I was also witness one day to an instance of the strong effect of religious prejudices.

I had been riding on the Marino, and was returning home by the Porto Felice to the Piazza de Marino. At a corner, on the right hand, where it turns into the square, is a church, but of which I do not remember the name. Round the steps were a great crowd, and in the street a party of dragoons. I rode up, and perceived a man in a naval uniform, holding by the iron gates which led into the portico of the church. To get up to these gates it is necessary to ascend several steps. Here the man stood ; no one attempted to seize him. I inquired what was the matter, and was informed that government had taken up this man ; that they were carrying him in a sedan-chair to prison ; that as he passed this church he

contrived to dart out of the front window, and get hold of the iron railings that encircle it. This became an immediate sanctuary: no one dared to touch him: he crept round to the gates I before mentioned, and there remained.

In the interim a party of dragoons were sent for, but all to no purpose; and after parading before the church a short time, they left him.

It was at this moment I went past. Seeing that I was an Englishman, he let go his hold, and desired to speak to me. I rode close to him, when he requested my interference; but I said, what was true, that I possessed no power. Not being a proficient in Italian, and the person who spoke to me being much agitated, I did not clearly comprehend what he said; but the purport of it was as follows:—That he had been employed in the English service (and certain it is, he wore our naval uniform); that the Sicilian government suspected him of some misconduct, or had mistaken him for some other person, and had thus taken him up with the intention of sending him to prison, when he escaped, as I have above related. In his manner and appearance he was respectable, and was well dressed. I had no means of serving him, nor if I had, could I prudently have interfered; but I waited to talk to him, because I perceived the crowd began to

disperse, and he seemed to fancy conversing with me afforded him some protection.

Another person now joined him, dressed in the same manner: he appeared his friend. They remained at the church till every person was gone, when they walked away together. I never saw or heard more of them. This is a strong proof of the respect paid to religion. How far it is, or is not right, that an edifice solely dedicated to religious purposes should be a sanctuary for crime, I will leave to wiser heads to decide.

If a person walks late at night in the streets of Palermo it is adviseable he should be armed, and even then he is not perfectly secure: the best method is to take a servant with a torch: there is then no danger.

Before I left Palermo the Police was considerably improved: the Prince Carigni, who was a long time in England, was Captain of the City, a situation of great consequence and importance. He took great pains to render the streets safe at night; indeed, he was indefatigable in doing so: though of such high rank, either himself, or one of his two brothers, went round with the patroles every night. When I first arrived at Palermo I rarely saw a patrole; latterly I never returned home, however late, without meeting them.

Having mentioned the Prince, I must be permitted to add that he is much attached to the English, and that both himself and the Princess do every thing in their power to render Palermo agreeable to a stranger.

CHAPTER X.

A SHORT EXCURSION INTO THE INTERIOR OF SICILY AS FAR AS CALTANIZETTA.—AUTHOR'S RETURN TO PALERMO.—DEPARTURE FROM THENCE FOR MESSINA.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROUTE.—TERMINI.—CEFALU.—BROLO.—MILAZZO, &c.—MESSINA, AND ACCOUNT OF THAT CITY.—CATANIA, AND ROUTE TO IT.—MOUNT *ÆTNA*.—ROUTE TO SYRACUSE.—DESCRIPTION OF THAT CITY.—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

SOME time previous to leaving Palermo for the eastern parts of Sicily I made a short excursion into the interior, with the original intention of going that way to Catania and Messina, but which I afterwards relinquished in consequence of the time of the year being unfavourable, and because one of the gentlemen of our party was obliged to return to Palermo at a stated period.

It was very early in the morning of the twenty-second of December when we left Palermo, but not such a December as our's: it was as mild as spring: every part of the country was covered with the most luxuriant green, and the weather was particularly fine even for Sicily. For the first seven miles the road lies along the sea-shore, and on every side the country is well cultivated. As we

proceeded we began to ascend immense mountains, where nature assumed a wilder appearance; but there were still to be seen in the valleys some beautiful spots of ground. To those who are fond of bold scenery, the views in this direction will be particularly attractive. We passed through Abbate, a place famous for good wine: a few miles further we came to a considerable town belonging to the Prince Catolico, where the King has a castle, which was garrisoned by a few soldiers: this was about twelve miles from Palermo. We breakfasted at a small solitary locanda, about eight miles further, and arrived at Palombo, a small village belonging to the Prince Lardarea, about seven o'clock in the evening. The road the whole of this day's journey was very good, and the country in many places offered the most romantic, but uncultivated scenery: we saw very few persons on the road, and the country appeared very thinly inhabited, except near the small towns. We met some large droves of mules, laden with merchandize, provisions, and money, going to the capital.

We had letters to a steward of the Prince, who resided at his house at Palombo; but I will not say much for the fare we met with. It was with some difficulty we were received: three bedsteads, with a mattress each, was all we could obtain. The place itself was only an assemblage of huts: the house where the steward lived was a

palace compared with the others ; but it was surrounded with mud, had no garden, and indeed no recommendation whatever. Over the village hung an immense rock, that seemed to threaten destruction to the inhabitants every instant. We did not regret leaving this place. At a very early hour we got to Valla-Lunga, about eighteen miles : the road still good : it is a small town surrounded by a tolerably well-cultivated country. This day's journey was rather barren of views : we saw little appearance of population, and still less of cultivation, which is more to be regretted, as the land on each side appeared excellent. There was no inn at Valla Lunga, but we obtained decent accommodation at the house of a private individual, who was in the habit of receiving strangers. The next day we proceeded to Caltanizetta, a distance of twenty-four miles : it belongs to the Prince Paterno, and gives a title to his eldest son. To this place there was no road whatever, merely tracks across the mountains, which, in fact, were hardly passable, as the mules sunk to their shoulders every step they took. Nothing can be more wild than this part of the country.

Caltanizetta is a well-built town, and is of considerable extent. We had a letter from the Prince San Hataldo to the Lieutenant-Colonel of his Regiment, who was quartered here. The Prince's residence is about five miles off. I am truly sorry I cannot re-

collect the name of his Lieutenant-Colonel, as our party owed many obligations to him for his attention and civility. Caltanizetta does not contain much that is worthy of notice: there are a few good houses, and some handsome churches, and the environs are picturesque; but there was an appearance of poverty amongst the higher classes. Many excellent private buildings were falling to the ground for want of repair; and although the annual receipts of the Prince Paterno from this place, merely for house-rent, is said to be thirty thousand dollars, there is no good road in any direction: one had been begun towards Palermo, but discontinued. It is evident, that until communications are made from all the towns in the interior of Sicily, the greater part of the country must remain uncultivated. In travelling through Sicily the tourist seldom perceives any single habitations, nor gentlemen's seats, as in other countries. It is only near towns and villages where there is any appearance of the surrounding country being inhabited, and even then only just in the vicinity: occasionally we passed some farm-houses, but it was almost always within sight of a village. If the Sicilian nobility, instead of residing in the capital, and there spending all their property, would pass some part of the year on their estates, the country would soon assume a very different appearance; but at present there is scarcely an individual of rank who resides on his estate, or who spends any

part of his property in its improvement ; whilst the tenants are left to the exactions, injustice, and ill-treatment of a steward.

One of our party proceeded on to Messina, whilst we returned to Palermo. Caltanizetta is rather better than eighty miles from that capital ; and in this little excursion into the interior, what most struck me was the poverty of the peasants, and the extreme richness of the soil, notwithstanding it is almost wholly left to nature. Though this was not the time of year to see the country to advantage, yet it may not be improper to observe, that the corn that grows in Sicily is of a particularly fine quality, and keeps for a long time ; but the price is high, an evil which is caused by the laws relative to grain, which it has already been remarked are of the most oppressive nature ; there is however every reason to hope that the changes which are about to take place in the Sicilian government will have the most happy effect, and that instead of being almost a desert, Sicily will once again become, what she is so capable of being---the granary of Europe.

In the remarks which I have thus thrown together, I am aware that I have not taken a very extensive notice of the many specimens of arts, nor given a description of the numerous antiquities which are so abundant in Sicily,

though some of them I have slightly noticed. This country has been the scene of many great events, and it is so intimately connected with the Roman history, that that circumstance alone is sufficient to interest the traveller; but I have two reasons for not attempting a detailed description of its ruins or its pictures.

First, because it is impossible to attempt the one without entering more deeply into ancient history than the original intention of this work would admit of, and I am too doubtful of my own abilities to undertake it; and secondly, with respect to paintings, it will readily be acknowledged that the finest, the most animated description of them, must ever fall short of the impression made on the person who has seen them; and as there is hardly a painting of any consequence in Europe that has not already been described, I shall content myself by saying, that those who are amateurs of the fine arts will find much to repay them in a trip to Sicily.

About the middle of March, 1810, I determined to return to England, and as I had not seen the other end of Sicily, I resolved to go there, and from thence to Malta. I hired a boat to coast it to Messina, which is by far the pleasantest mode of conveyance. There was a good awning, under which I spread my mattrass. The boat's crew consisted of ten men, the

master, and a boy ; with myself and servant. It is necessary, on this route, for a traveller to take his own provisions, though we landed every morning to breakfast near some house. My servant used to make a fire, and warm my chocolate ; and whilst he was doing this I generally bathed, and then found myself as much refreshed as if I had been in bed all night. After breakfast we proceeded on our way, either rowing or sailing, but always keeping close in-shore ; and when dinner-time came, landed under the rocks, or wherever there was shade. In this manner I passed some of the pleasantest days of my life ; indeed, all persons who are fond of their own reflections, and who can relish the most beautiful scenery, which is always changing, will find much pleasure in a similar tour. The third day of this delightful route we had a very fine view of Mount *Ætna*, though more than fifty miles from it.

We saw several towns, at some of which I landed. I shall not, however, attempt elaborate descriptions of them. I believe there are few persons who are more capable of deriving pleasure from travelling than myself ; but, I confess, I cannot write volumes to make people think as I do, although I shall endeavour slightly to note my feelings as we passed along.

Some distance from Palermo, after passing the charming scenery of *La Bagaria*, we came near to *Monte Gerbino*,

a lofty cape, whose outline is extremely picturesque, though, on a near approach, its total want of verdure presents rather a scene of desolation than of beauty.

It still retains, in common conversation, its Saracenic name of Zaffarana, by which name the excellent wine of its district is generally known; for this it has, indeed, so long been famous, that it is supposed its other appellation of Gerbino is derived from an Arabic word, signifying a cask.

In this vicinity the sea also is as productive as the land, here being a very extensive tunny fishery, which gives employment in the season to a number of boats: this fishery is carried on by means of nets, into which the fish are driven by the fishermen surrounding the shoals in their boats, and then terrifying the unhappy animals by the noise which they make.

Close by this spot is the beautiful Hill of Alfano, more remarkable on account of the Castle of Solento, which is built upon it, and supposed to be on the very spot where the ancient city of Solentum, first founded by the Phœnicians, was placed, and which is described by some of the earliest historians.

The maritime district now becomes very mountainous

as we approach to Termini, a town situated in the province of Val di Mazara: it takes its name from the river, at the mouth of which it is built, and that from the ancient *Thermæ*, or natural baths in its vicinity. It has a castle with a small garrison, and is famous for its hot baths. It is to this place that the Queen has lately retired, though it is said she has some intention of going to Germany; but I do not think this likely.

At present, Termini affords certainly very few temptations to residence, beyond its salutary springs, as it is in great poverty. I have not, however, been able to verify the fact that it is principally inhabited by shoemakers, as has been mentioned by former tourists: nor did I find any traces, though the fact is certain, of there having been here some years ago a society whose object was to establish a system of robbery and murder, the principals of which, it is said, were merchants. This society, however, existed but a short time, as the government soon got intelligence of its designs, when most of the members were arrested and executed, the others seeking safety in voluntary banishment.

Notwithstanding the want of cultivation in this vicinity, the fertility of its soil is fully evinced by the luxuriant orange and lemon trees which are to be seen in the surrounding gardens; and though the country

consists principally of rocky hills of considerable steepness, yet between their foot and the sea coast there is a tract of land which produces corn, wine, and oil, in great abundance.

This place, or its neighbourhood, for antiquaries are not agreed on the subject, was the scite of the ancient city of Himera, a colony established by the superfluous population from the city of Messina.

It afterwards suffered the horrors of a siege from the Carthaginians; and it is a curious fact, that the war in which this took place was one of alliance between that warlike and commercial people and the Persian monarch, Xerxes, when he proceeded for the conquest of Greece; they engaging to take possession of all the Sicilian colonies, whilst he should overrun the mother country. On this occasion, however, the assailants suffered a complete defeat from Theron, who was called the tyrant of Agrigentum; but who appears, in this instance at least, to have been the gallant friend of liberty. Hamilcar was the Carthaginian general, and Theron dispatched an army under the command of his son-in-law, Gelo, who gained a most glorious victory on the very day that the gallant Leonidas, and his heroic devoted Spartans, sealed the cause of freedom in Greece with their lives; as if, says the ancient historian, some God had ordained

that the same day should present to that nation the most important victory, and the most glorious defeat, which their history could ever boast of.

At a future period, however, Himera was taken and destroyed by Hannibal, the city plundered, the temples robbed and then burned, and the whole place razed to the ground; whilst the women and children were divided amongst the Carthaginian soldiery, and the men, to the number of three thousand, sacrificed in cold blood.

Yet so salutary were the medicinal springs in its vicinity, that a new city was founded soon after, and called "Therma Himeræa," from whence is the evident derivation of the modern Termini.

These springs are very warm; they may indeed even be called hot; being represented in the ancient mythology as formed for the use of Hercules, after his labours, by the nymphs of the place, under the direction of Minerva herself.

Those who have written expressly of Termini, describe it also as the birth-place of Stesichorus, a poet, who was so anxious to preserve a rational spirit of union amongst his countrymen, that he wrote the exquisite little fable of the Horse who chose the man for

his friend, in his quarrel with the stag; a fable by no means inapplicable to the continental politics of the present day.

Whilst coasting along from Termini towards Cefalu, we found the country possessing little interest in its landscape, until our near approach towards the latter place; when we passed the mouth of the River Grande, which here divides the Val di Mazara from the province of Val Demona: but here the hills present a scene of cultivation to their very summits, interspersed with groves of the olive, and of that species of ash which yields the manna, as well as fruit-trees of various kinds.

The next place of any consequence where I landed was Cefalu: it is the see of a bishop, and is in the province of Val de Demona. It is situated on a promontory, and is but a small town, formed of several dirty streets extremely narrow; above it there rises a large rocky hill, with a very steep and almost inaccessible road leading to a castle on its summit, which is capable of a long defence, the narrow pass leading to it being easily fortified, though at present merely protected by a wall of some considerable strength.

The rock on which the castle stands, and at whose foot the town is placed, bears such a resemblance to a

human head, as to have induced the ancient Greeks to give it that name, whence the modern appellation. At a distance, indeed, coming from the westward, it seemed to be an island detached from the main.

Behind it are the lofty mountains of San Calogaro and Madonia. The town itself is so ancient as to be described by Diodorus, the Sicilian geographer.

It is not a place of much trade, though the fishery on the coast might be rendered very productive, besides the many olive trees in its vicinity ; but the inhabitants have a very bad character, at least so I was informed, and was advised not to walk any great distance from the town.

The place itself did not interest me much, but the country round it was most luxuriant. On the top of a small hill I found every species of wild plant, of the finest kinds, growing without any sort of cultivation but what nature bestowed.

After leaving Cefalu, we passed the mouth of the river Tusa, on whose banks, though at a considerable distance, we could discern the small town of Tusa, covered by its ancient castle. This is a place of considerable antiquity, being founded as far back as four centuries before the Christian æra.

It was then called Alæsa, and afterwards, from its convenient port, became a favourite resort of the Romans.

From this spot the mountains come close to the beach, hanging over it in many places in inaccessible precipices : a little further on, a pleasant green hill presents the palace and town of San Stephano to view. This is but a small place, and its poverty is so excessive, that all description is unnecessary.

Here the coast makes an extensive bend, with an inlet running up to some distance, and leading to the small town of Caronia. This was too far distant for me to visit it, but it is impossible to pass the surrounding scenery without admiration, and its beauty is of such ancient date, that it is said the Greeks gave it a name which signified the beautiful shore.

A little further on is San Marco, which has been considered as the ancient Aluntium, and near it is Santa Agatha, from a Saint of very doubtful origin, as this was the scite of Agathyrna, a city founded by a son of the God Æolus, a fable, no doubt, merely emblematic of its exposed situation. The name of Agatha is therefore evidently derived from the ancient appellation ; to which the pious Sicilians, in after ages, have added the mark of canonization.

The coast from hence, after passing the mouth of the small river Rosmarino, a name adopted from the profusion of the Rosemary on its banks, consists generally of picturesque, but uncultivated mountain scenery, covered with a profusion of wild shrubs, principally of myrtles and other evergreens.

On many of the hills small towns may be observed, as well as numerous villages on the small spots capable of cultivation in the small plains at their bases, presenting a scene of industrious population scarcely to be expected here. We now passed Cape Orlando, rendered famous in chivalrous romance from the name of Orlando, one of the most gallant knights of Charlemagne, who, with his companion Olivero, performed some of his daring deeds in this vicinity.

Here a small bight opens into the valley of Brolo, formed by a chain of hills, which were called the Mountains of Juno in ancient Grecian lore. It is generally believed too, that this is, or may perhaps be, the very valley so elegantly described by Diodorus Siculus, who represents it as the birth-place of the Shepherd Daphnis, a son of Mercury, and his mother a nymph of the place, by whose companions the young demi-god was educated. Here he kept his flocks, and was depicted by the name of *Bucolos*, or the handsome shepherd; and here he gave scope

to the exercise of his poetic talents, being the inventor of that species of poetry called *Bucolics*, and of that species of harmonious composition so well known amongst modern performers by the appellation of Siciliano. No place, indeed, can be imagined, even when seen at a distant glance, more fitted to be the scene of such events.

For a considerable distance along the coast, the most delightful vales open on the passing of each promontory; their hills, verdant with groves of oak, and thickets of myrtle; and their bases smiling with plenty, and covered with vineyards, and corn-fields enclosed in hedges of various fruit-trees.

On turning round the point of Orlando, a small bay is formed by that cape, and the headland of Carava to the east, leading into the vale of Brolo, as mentioned above. The bay itself opens in a fine curve, whilst the vale forms a similar kind of crescent, backed by lofty mountains, which seem to preserve the same outline.

In looking towards this romantic scenery, the eye wanders amongst the most distant hills, until almost lost amidst their dark purple recesses, or fixes itself on some of the intervening vallies, which, in some places, overshadowed by the frowning rocks and hills, seem to decline into nocturnal darkness.

On many of the surrounding hills, small towns, with dim discovered spires, may be discerned, whilst the immediate foreground presents a lower range of eminences, clothed with the loftiest forest trees, or with vineyards and orchards, sinking into the well-cultivated vallies and small plains covered with corn-fields, and affording every prospect of fertility.

In this happy situation the extreme heat is always checked by the salubrious sea or mountain breezes, whilst a sufficient supply of moisture is afforded by two rivers, the San Angelo and another, that skirt each side of the vale, which is generally called Piano di Brolo, a name either taken from, or perhaps given to a small castle situated in a most romantic position, upon a steep rock which overlooks this charming scenery. This castle is near the sea, and is the property of the noble family of Lungaria; and its immediate vicinity presents a display of numerous poplars of a very extraordinary size and beauty. The eastern side of this Bay, called Carava, is extremely mountainous, and though steep, nay, apparently inaccessible in most places, yet bears evident signs of the cultivation of the vine, whilst its vallies are fruitful in corn.

Before passing its extreme point, which consists of a lofty precipitous promontory, boldly facing the ever-

beating surge, we could perceive a long range of rocks, on the summit of which appears a lofty tower, whose erection, the people in the vicinity seem, by its name, which is Torre di Diavoli, to attribute to an agent who has credit for many such works; and they doubtless supposed that no other person would have fixed his habitation on such a spot.

We may safely, however, consider it as the work of some less potent being, as it is also called Castello di Liagi.

After rounding Cape Carava, the River Oliveri empties itself into the sea in the winter; and on the western bank is a lofty hill, on which stands the town of Tripi; little larger, indeed, than a village, but ornamented with a castle apparently of some extent, and of considerable antiquity, no doubt, for here it is said once stood the Grecian settlement of Abacœon.

So partial, indeed, were that people to this vicinity, that they actually gave the name of Helicon to this little River of Oliveri, which is merely formed by the winter torrents.

In fact, there is scarcely a valley or headland that does not recall some tale of ancient lore, and in this immediate

vicinity the Mountain of Tindaro, in particular, makes a most conspicuous appearance. Close to the sea side stands, on a small eminence, the Monastery of Santa Maria de Tindaro; and immediately in its neighbourhood, though I did not observe any traces of ruins, was the scite of a Grecian settlement as far back as the time of Dyonisius, the tyrant of Syracuse, said to have been founded by the people of Messenia in Greece, on lands bestowed by that Prince.

The name of Tyndaris they are considered as having adopted from Tyndarus, King of Sparta, so well known by every school-boy, as the husband of Leda, and reputed father not only of Helen and Clytemnestra, but also of Castor and Pollux, agreeable to the old story of Jupiter and his Queen.

From hence, after viewing the most delightful and picturesque scenery, we approached Milazzo. This place is very strongly fortified, the citadel being of recent erection, and, at present, garrisoned by the British. It is about thirty miles from Messina, and is placed upon a small cape or headland, which being nearly an island, presents a good situation for defence, according either to the ancient or modern system of warfare. Of course, its properties did not escape the Grecian emigrants in earlier times, a colony of whom, from the country of the

Messenii, settled here, and gave it the name of Mylæ. It could, at any time, have been made an island ; for the isthmus which connects it with the main land is so narrow, and rises so little above the level of the Mediterranean, that it might be cut through with little difficulty.

The town itself presents some handsome specimens both of religious and domestic architecture: and the country in its vicinity is extremely delightful from the united charms of sea and land ; for the hills, which come down almost to the water's edge, are generally picturesque, and the ideas of distance are strongly excited in the mind by the purple tints of the summit of *Ætna* itself, seen at times boldly crowning the outline of the romantic steeps.

After passing this place, we were challenged, during the night, by English sentinels, who are placed along the coast the whole way to Messina. This is necessary, not merely from the vicinity of the coast of Calabria, where the French are, but also because of the privateers, which on this part of the coast are very numerous.

No prospect can be more striking than the view of Messina from the sea.

Its almost circular port, which is at least four miles

in circuit, has every appearance of being the crater of an ancient volcano, one side of the circle being broken in; but the wide extending cape forms a capacious curve so as to present in some measure the appearance of a sickle, which in the Aboriginal language being *Zancle*, that name was first given to the city erected here.

The mythological history of the place, indeed, gives an origin very different from a volcanic one, for there was a tradition, which Diodorus records, that Orion, in obedience to the wishes of Zancus, King of Messina, in early times, actually raised the present cape as a dam or mole to form the harbour.

Without attending, however, to those fables, the most careless spectator cannot fail being struck with the appearance of lofty, and of rugged mountains, which rise almost immediately from the beach: so that Messina is in general situated upon high ground, forming a noble sweep on the swelling eminences, and rising in pleasing gradation so as to present almost every public edifice in the best point of view; its masses of elegant white architecture, glowing in the sunbeam, and finely contrasting with the deep green of the immense forests which clothe the background, whilst the lower grounds on each side exhibit every symptom of extraordinary fertility. A circumstance which, instead of the shape of the port, has been sup-

posed to have caused the ancient allusion to the sickle in its name.

On our arrival at Messina we met with some little detention at the Custom-House. It being very early in the morning, no one was up. Had I not been an Englishman I should have had to wait three hours. I confess I was not sorry to find myself at a comfortable inn, scarcely having pulled off my cloaths for some days.

The manners, habits, customs, &c. of Messina, are, of course, similar to Palermo; the only difference is, that at the latter place they are much gayer; and Palermo possesses one great advantage over Messina, that of having good roads in the vicinity, whereas at Messina, hills surround it in every direction, and these, except the road to Catania, are all very bad.

The modern city is built on the strait of Messina, in the province of Val di Demona: it is the ancient capital of Sicily, is now the see of an archbishop, and there can be no doubt that it was a town in the time of the Siculi, or most ancient inhabitants of the island; though the Greek historian, Thucydides, observes that its first Grecian occupants were pirates who lived on the Italian shore of Campania, principally in the city of Cumæ,

and derived their origin from emigrant colonists from Chalcis in the Eubœan state.

Perhaps of these ancient settlers there are no descendants here at present, for in the troubled state of those times, the Cumæans were conquered and driven away by a colony direct from Greece, or more properly speaking, from Asia, consisting of the Samians and other inhabitants of Ionia, who left their native homes to escape from the tyranny of the Persian government.

This vicinity seems, indeed, at that era to have been the refuge of the oppressed; for soon after, a colony settled at, or near to Messina, from the country of the Messenii, when their leader, Anaxileus, bestowed on it the name of his native place, and that of Zancle became lost in the revolutions of ages.

Its situation, so convenient to commerce, and the fertility of its vicinity, soon rendered it flourishing; but these advantages only served to tempt the cupidity, and to facilitate the approach of invaders, so that the Carthaginians completely destroyed it during the reign of Dyonisius the elder, who afterwards refounded it: but the city suffering the most cruel fate from the tyrants Hipparchus and Hippo, it was indebted to Timoleon of

Corinth for the establishment of its liberty ; a chief, whom historians describe as always victorious, and always availing himself of his success in favour of freedom.

It has been the fate of Messina also to suffer much from the liberties taken by republicans ; and it is recorded, on authority which cannot be doubted, that the people of Mamertum, a city of Campania, who were free themselves, having formed a desire to enslave it, they actually obtained assistance for this nefarious purpose from the free Republic of Rome ; a circumstance from whence the first of the Punic wars arose.

It is unnecessary to follow it through its various political changes ; but some other historical anecdotes, of more recent date, will be found in a future page.

In some respects Messina is a place of more consequence than Palermo, not only from its most excellent harbour, but also from its very considerable trade, chiefly consisting in silk, oil, fruit, corn, and wine.

Its fruit trade, in particular, is capable of being much extended, as it possesses some species superior to those of other parts of the island, or even of Italy.

The citrons are very fine, and one species of a sweet flavour, known by the name of Valenziana, perhaps first brought from Spain, is often of the size of a small melon; whilst another, the Lemonella di Spagna, or small Spanish lemon, is much admired for its very odoriferous flavour. The silk trade is here carried to a very considerable extent: the manufacturers live in the environs of Messina, and extend for a considerable way along that part of the coast, called the Faro.

This city suffered most severely from an earthquake in the year 1783, the effects of which it has not yet recovered. The whole of the Marino was destroyed; indeed, the whole of this magnificent city must then have presented a most desolate prospect, as scarcely a house was left entire; for not only churches and palaces, but even the humblest mansions became a scene of ruin.

It is proper to notice, however, that in many parts of the city only the upper stories were thrown down, whilst the lower ones remaining, afforded a safe shelter to numbers towards the close of this awful visitation, who had learned experience from the first shocks; for then many who remained in the houses, as well as those who flew into the streets, being killed by the fall of the buildings,

the survivors sought and found shelter under the door and window frames, their situation thus placing them out of the range of the falling materials.

It has been said that this earthquake produced a fertilizing effect, no less extraordinary than the fertility which has often resulted from volcanic devastation ; for both at Messina and Scylla, many ladies who had been married for a series of years, without children, became the mothers of very fine families ; nor did a single obstetric accident happen to any of the fair sex, from the terror and alarm which must naturally have accompanied the horrors of the scene. When I was there they were building the Marino up again, on the same spot, only throwing the houses a little further back so as to widen the road : when finished, both it and other parts will be very handsome, particularly as they are widening all the streets, though most of the new erected houses possess a smaller elevation than their predecessors, the architects having learned wisdom from experience ; yet still, from their elegance, they may be said to resemble palaces. Great attention has also been paid to the strength of these modern edifices, being raised on arches throughout the whole of the ground floors, whilst these vaults, being distinct from the dwellings, are generally occupied as shops.

Opposite to this Marino is the Quay, the water being

so deep as to enable ships of very large tonnage to unload there.

The situation of Messina, as already slightly noticed, can scarcely be equalled for beauty of scenery. The city itself is built in the form of an amphitheatre, rising gradually on the hills that surround it. On the left lies the Faro, opposite the coast of Calabria, and extending from it are seen the high promontories which are passed in going to Naples. The distance across the streights which divide Calabria and Sicily is not more than three miles in the narrowest part, and seven in the broadest; and vessels must also pass through these streights in going to Malta. So much has been said and sung of these streights, and of Scylla and Charybdis, that nothing is left for a modern tourist to notice. The modern Charybdis, for some suppose the ancient one to have been nearer to Cape Peloro, is not very far distant from the Light-house, and is nothing more than a small rippling stream, no longer possessing any of those terrifying attributes bestowed on it by the poets, when the streight, or faro, was perhaps much narrower.

At present, so little danger is there of falling into it, that the guides for the curiosities of the place and neighbourhood, have some difficulty to find it, the rippling

being seldom of any great magnitude, except when the wind and the current are adverse to each other.

When I was at Messina the French were encamped on the opposite coast at Reggio: with a glass I could distinguish them perfectly.

The whole coast, as far to the north as Milazzo, a distance of thirty miles, is now guarded by our troops: sentinels and gun-boats are posted the whole way. This is necessary, on account of the near vicinity of the enemy, in addition to the defences of Milazzo itself, which, as already noticed, is strongly fortified by nature and art, and has a very considerable garrison.

This city is not capable of defending itself against an enemy, being commanded by the surrounding country; but the citadel, which was built when the Spaniards possessed Sicily, is a strong place, defended by a numerous artillery, and does not require a larger garrison than two thousand five hundred men.

Messina cannot now boast of so many fine buildings as Palermo, nor does it offer the same attractions to a stranger, except as to scenery; still, however, there is much worthy of notice. It contains some very handsome churches, mostly rebuilt since the earthquake, with the

exception of the Cathedral, whose principal front remains entire. This is one of the most beautiful specimens of architecture in the island, and is singular both in form and materials. The portico and portal forming the entrance at the grand front are executed in elegant white marble, and are embellished with numerous statues: there is something, however, rather *bizarre* in some of the ornaments; and the red ground of some of the walls looks very heavy, though adorned with Mosaic-work in various compartments.

As Palermo possesses from Heaven a certain safeguard against all misfortune, in the opinion of its pious inhabitants, so has Messina been equally favoured in obtaining a protecting grace equally valid. This is an epistle written to the inhabitants of Messina, many centuries ago, by the Virgin Mary, who, understanding no language but her own, wrote it in Hebrew, but prevailed upon St. Paul to translate it into Greek, not choosing to perform that operation herself by means of a miracle.

She thought proper, however, to interfere in a maraculous manner for its recent preservation, as this palladium of happiness and prosperity was saved from the destruction of the earthquake, and is now in the treasury of the Cathedral, where it is kept with great

veneration, having saved the church; though it did not deign to extend the same favour to the rest of the city.

After all, this original is only a copy; for, the one written by the Virgin being lost during the Saracenic period of Sicilian history, she did not choose to continue the correspondence, and Messina must have remained deprived of its safeguard, if a lucky fellow, a refugee Greek of the name of Christopher Lascaris, had not found this copy of it about the middle of the fifteenth century.

He translated it into Latin; but some antiquaries, not allowing to the Virgin the gift of prophecy, have rudely asked how it came to pass that she should have dated her letter in a mode of notation not in use for five centuries afterwards? But to the faithful this is a trifle, and of no more consequence than the want of a post-mark; of course, the Messinians piously trust to it, and consider themselves therefore, not only the first people in Sicily, but actually as more favoured by Heaven than all other parts of the earth put together.

Messina is a sea-port: its trade is very considerable, and the consequent influx of foreigners, added to the presence of the English army, gives to Messina a greater

appearance of business than Palermo ; indeed, since the arrival of the English, the place is become greatly enriched. The number of inhabitants are supposed to amount to twenty-eight thousand.

Of the manners of those inhabitants I have already spoken, and shall therefore here dismiss the subject with a short historical anecdote illustrative of the excellence of the fair natives of this place, at a period not very remote. I allude to the dreadful siege which it suffered from Charles of Anjou, soon after the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers.

So much was to be dreaded from the fury of the besiegers, stimulated by hopes of plunder, and goaded by desire of revenge, that the whole population exerted themselves in the defence of their native city ; and even the priests did not consider themselves as exempt either from labour or military duty. But the ladies set the most shining example of heroic constancy, equal even to that displayed at the memorable sieges of Saragossa, in our day.

This praiseworthy conduct was commenced by the noble matrons, who, not only hushed all those delicate sentiments which make the sex shrink from deeds of blood, but seemed even to have forgotten their constitu-

tional weakness, and exposed themselves to fatigue and the inclemency of the weather, independent of their personal exposure to military dangers.

The stimulus which led to this heroic conduct was indeed most powerful. They of all others had every thing to dread: their own honour, that of their husbands and families, the delicacy of their lovely offspring, all, all conspired to prompt them to exertion, in order to assist in saving these treasures from the unhallowed excesses of a brutal and unlicensed soldiery.

Like the Spanish females, they assisted in carrying arms and ammunition to their brave defenders on the ramparts, and even stones and materials to repair the damaged defences. In the hour of danger and fatigue, they carried to them such refreshments as their city afforded; and when the citizens, worn down with labour, were about to surrender, these noble fair ones advanced into the front of danger, with their infants at their bosoms, or followed by their lovely daughters, and called upon fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers, to protect them from the desolating assaults of the enemy.

Such eloquence could not fail of success. The citizens persevered in their defence, and repelled the assailants,

untill the siege was raised by the advance of an army under Peter of Arragon.

From Messina to Catania the country is flatter than in most parts of Sicily ; I do not mean that it is a plain, for, except in the immediate vicinity of Catania and Palermo, there is no such thing in Sicily ; it is only comparatively less mountainous.

On leaving Messina for the eastern coast, the tourist first passes, for a short distance, through a district entirely occupied as gardens, from whence he traverses a narrow path overhung with steep romantic masses of different coloured marbles ; but this is soon changed for a rugged mountainous country, skirting the narrow plain by the sea shore, where every advantage has been taken of the situation for agricultural purposes, and along which his route leads.

During many a long and weary league towards Taormina, he is obliged to cross numberless torrents, or their rough stony beds if the weather is dry, in which the fury of the winter streams is strongly pictured. His way, however, is enlivened in many places by villages, whose houses, being built in a style said to have been frequent in the early days of Greece and Rome, that is, in alternate

layers, or courses of stone and brick, not only excite classical ideas in the mind, but also offer pictures of neatness and comfort, which are far from being realized on a nearer approach.

Except in these places, where the towns are built on the small plains, the road leads entirely along the base of rugged calcareous cliffs.

On approaching Taormina the country becomes extremely pleasant, and is in general in high cultivation. This is the great silk country ; and though it produces excellent red wines, and has many olive-trees, yet either it is so unfit for the raising of corn, or the inhabitants choose to dedicate their labours so much to the silk-worm, that they are obliged to seek a supply of food from other districts of the island.

The want of arable cultivation is not felt, however, in a picturesque point of view, for the varied and ever changing scenery has all the charms that the verdant tinted foliage of the mulberry and olive-trees can afford ; and though the landscape may not be so sublime as in other parts of the island, yet I am not disposed to differ with preceding tourists, who have declared those hills to be the prettiest in Sicily.

But here, indeed, the traveller has no leisure to fix his attention on any thing but the sublimity of *Ætna*, the traces of whose early eruptions he perceives all around.

My route through this part of the country was too rapid to give detailed accounts of each distinct place, having merely passed *Cape della Scaletta*, and had a glance of the castle and village, its foot, and of the ruinous tower on its summit.

At *Fiumi di Nisi* there was nothing remarkable; but curiosity is strongly excited by the appearance of the *Castle of Alessio*, standing on a lofty rock, and commanding the road which ascends up a lofty hill, from whose summit is seen the charming valley in which *Taormina* is situated.

The road down this hill is not only steep, but so very rough, as only to be passable by mules; nor does the modern town repay the traveller for his labour in descending to it: yet its situation is picturesque, on the very edge of a lofty precipice, and apparently threatened by overhanging rocks, on which stands the village of *Mola*, in a situation which appears almost inaccessible.

Below is the village of *Giardini*, on the shore, now the

port of Taormina, but containing nothing to tempt to a visit. The antiquary, however, will find much to amuse him on the scite of the ancient Tauromenium, where there are still vast ruins, part of which is an extensive theatre, whose arcades of ancient brick-work, and whose walls of pebbles, all once covered with the finest marbles, have still withstood the attacks of time.

To the classical tourist these must afford high satisfaction, as they are sufficiently entire to illustrate the ancient style of theatric edifices; and so much still remains as to support the idea that this was one of the finest in the island.

Round the precincts of these immense masses of ruin, are still to be seen the remains of the ancient sepulchres, many of which are now converted into modern dwelling-houses; and the whole assimilates well with the surrounding scenery of lofty mountains, capped in clouds, chequered by villages, ruins, and castles on every fragment of frowning rock, backed by the forests and snowy summit of *Ætna*, and with the sea expanded at the base.

Beyond Taormina the road leads past the Tower of Schiso, which is said to stand on the ruins of the ancient Naxos, now overwhelmed with lava, which lines one side of the bay at the mouth of the River Cantara.

It is a curious fact, as observed by geologists, that this river forms the boundary of the volcanic erupted matter on the northern extreme; one side of the river being formed of lava, whilst the other bank consists of marble and other calcareous substances.

The road now leads past the foot of *Ætna* itself, which may almost be considered in this part as an extensive plain, smiling with fertility, and in high cultivation, exhibiting on all sides vineyards and fields of corn, interspersed with forests of oak, and with numerous groves of olives, of the fig, almond, and walnut-tree.

We now approach to Catania, which is the most flourishing town in Sicily, next to Palermo and Messina. It is built at the mouth of a river, which discharges itself into the Gulf of Catania, and the descent to it presents the most delightful prospect, the road leading through almost endless groves of olives and other trees; whilst the city itself appears at the commencement of an extensive plain, finely contrasting its rich cultivation with the surrounding wild mountain scenery.

Midst all this beauty, however, there are repeated marks of volcanic devastation in the immense masses of lava on all sides, which form a melancholy appearance amidst the gay verdure of the environs of Catania itself.

This place has suffered most severely from earthquakes, but notwithstanding it has recovered their effects; nor do the inhabitants attempt to remove from the neighbourhood of Mount Ætna, although its eruptions have so often been fatal to them. The number of inhabitants are nearly the same as at Messina, and the city boasts as high antiquity; being founded by the people of Chalcis, who fled here on being driven out of Eubœa, after which it has undergone all the various Roman, Saracenic, and Norman revolutions.

This city contains the only university in the island, and it is the scene of education for the gentlemen of the long robe, so as to be considered quite as the nursery of forensic eloquence.

After its complete destruction by the last earthquake and volcanic eruption, the inhabitants, who had time to escape, returned to the scite of their ancient habitations, which, however, they did not attempt to rebuild for some years, living, at first, in barracks provided for them by the government. Of late years, indeed, they have set themselves assiduously to work on its restoration, but it has been curiously observed, that this ancient city is now of more modern date than many of its inhabitants.

Many traces of the Roman city have been discovered under the ancient lavas, through the researches of Prince Biscaris, whose attempts have been repaid by finding the ancient baths, and many figures of stucco and plaister. Here are still also some remnants even above the volcanic masses : these are part of a theatre and amphitheatre, as well as part of a pyramid, and some ancient tombs in the garden of the Capuchin Convent.

The whole of these ruins are rich in marbles, and afford much entertainment to the passing stranger ; who will also be pleased with much of the modern architecture, particularly the churches, amongst which the Cathedral is extremely large, and no less beautiful, crowned with an elegant cupola of large dimensions.

This place is considered, upon the whole, as one of the most agreeable for residence in Sicily. Wine is excellent : the town itself, clean and regular ; and the buildings handsome, many of them magnificent. The country round it, as observed before, is beautiful, and nothing can exceed the scenery of the plain of Catania, bounded by Mount *Ætna* and the sea.

The Sicilians are much attached to this mountain, and with great reason : it produces them every necessary

and every luxury of life; and without the inexhaustible supply of snow obtained from its summit, how would the Sicilians exist during the heats of summer?

As I did not myself ascend this mountain, I will give the account of a person who did, presenting a rapid picture of its beauties; but referring for more detailed accounts to the many writers on this subject.

The summit of Mount Ætna is throughout the whole year covered with snow. The heat in Sicily is never greater than in the months of June and July, yet the atmosphere on the top of this mountain is even then like winter. Immense quantities of snow lay frozen around, and on approaching the summit, the ascent is so steep that the traveller is obliged to dismount from his mule, and get up as well as he can: on getting nearer, a strong smell of sulphur is perceived. The opening of the crater is very large, and is composed of pieces of lava piled one on the other. For some time before the tourist can reach the highest part of the mountain, the smoke rises from the ground under his feet, and he hears a great noise, resembling distant thunder.

The view from hence is said to be sublime: the eye takes in the whole of Sicily, like a panorama: the straits that divide Sicily and Calabria appear like a

small stream of water: the islands that surround Sicily seem to be at a very small distance, whilst around, on every side, is the unlimited prospect of the ocean.

Leaving Catania for Syracuse, the road leads over the before mentioned fertile plain, for a distance of twenty miles, after which a lofty hill, covered with olive-trees, presents itself. From thence the route lays over an extent of country, for a few miles almost covered with rocks, but soon giving way to the smiling appearance of cultivation, with all its accompaniments of cottages and enclosures, surrounded by olive-grounds and fields of corn.

We now approach Augusta, built on, or near, to the scite of the ancient Greek city of Megara. The town itself stands upon a small peninsula, at the mouth of a valley opening to the sea. Some years ago, considerable sums of money were expended on its fortifications, but to very little purpose, though its citadel is still in pretty good preservation. Here are also some extensive salt-ponds, which may become valuable, when liberty and a good government shall give a stimulus to the industry of its inhabitants.

Proceeding southerly from Augusta, we pass a tract of country, for a few miles, which presents a strong contrast

with the plain on the north side ; yet, even this, though stony, and at present almost barren, except as pasturage, is far from being wholly incapable of improvement.

We next ascend a rough road cut in the rocks, the work of the ancient Greek residents, and still called by the name of Scala Græca. This is about four miles distant from the ancient city of Syracuse, which is in the province of Val di Noto, but is only a ruin of its former self. It is unnecessary to remind my reader what it once was ; now it has scarcely any trade, and its harbours are almost quite empty. This place must have undergone some great change, natural as well as political, for the sea has evidently made great encroachments, and the ruins and foundations of a great part of the ancient city are said to be under water. There is much at this place worthy the attention of a traveller.

We are told that the Cathedral was once the Temple of Minerva. Its pillars, or columns, are certainly many of them antique, and of the Doric order, and the *cella* of some ancient edifice is still joined with the walls of the modern church, though not in very high preservation ; and indeed, the church itself has suffered much from different earthquakes. Here is still to be seen that vast excavation called the Ear of Dyonisius, which seems a na-

tural production, forming a Gothic arch at the top ; but is supposed to have been used as a quarry, before the discovery of its remarkable power of conveying sounds to its roof induced the tyrant to apply it to the purposes of a prison.

At a short distance from the city is a church, partly under ground, said to be the oldest in the island ; and near this is a convent, whose vaults have the property of preserving dead bodies, similar to that in the vicinity of Palermo.

To trace the ruins of the various theatres, and other antiquities, would require a residence of some weeks ; and it was much beyond the power of a transient visitor to examine the limits of the three ancient cities of which Syracuse once consisted.

The country around is extremely fertile, and produces no less than twelve different varieties of wine, of which the Muscatello is most excellent. Indeed, it is said that there are no less than forty varieties in the limits of the diocese ; and for honey, the vicinity of Syracuse was almost as famous as Hybla. Nay, such was the opinion of the ancient mythologists of its fertility, that it was here they fabled Pluto to have struck the earth, in order

to descend with his fair prize, Proserpine, to the infernal regions; a fable evidently allusive to the happy soil and climate.

From Sicily I proceeded to Malta, which I left with the first fleet for England. The vessel I had taken my passage in, being small and heavily laden, I did not like to proceed in her to England. I remained, therefore, for some weeks at Gibraltar, when, through the kindness of some friends, I obtained a passage home in His Majesty's ship the *Hibernia*, Captain Dunn, to whose civility, as well as to every officer on board the ship, I have the greatest obligations; and I shall always consider the six weeks I passed on board the *Hibernia* as one of the happiest periods of my life.

In this hasty sketch of a visit to Sicily, I am aware of the numerous faults that may exist, and of the inadequate description of many interesting objects: but I have already said, that when in Sicily I did not travel with the intention of becoming an author; and domestic occurrences, unnecessary to relate, having obliged me to hasten my return to England, I have been obliged, in many instances, to depend upon the efforts of memory. Still, as to my opinions, public as well as private, I do not hesitate to say, that I conceive it unnecessary to make the

least apology for them. I write as I feel, and as I think; and my only hope is---that these feelings, and these thoughts, are such as may rather do good than harm, should those who have the power of amending the condition of the Sicilians be actuated by sentiments of a similar tendency.

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 55, line 7, read *retired* for *retire*.
— 64, line 19, read *conversazioni* for *conversationes*, and in this manner throughout the whole Book.
— 130, line 16, read *Spacaforno* for *Spacasorno*.
— ib. line 22, for *this not*, read *this is not*.

B. CLARKE, Printer, Well-Street, London.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 028 073 058 0